Farish A. Noor

Data-Gathering in Colonial Southeast Asia 1800-1900

Framing the Other

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Farish A. Noor

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To my wife Amy,
As always

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.[1]

H.G. Wells,
The War of the Worlds

1 Wells, 1898: 1.

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A Note on Spelling

A note on the spelling of words and names as they appear in this book:

I have retained the spelling of words and names as they appeared in the texts that I refer to in the following chapters, and in some cases there have been differences in the way some names were written by different authors. In the case of place-names, I have retained the original spelling as found in the texts I refer to in the first instance, but have otherwise used contemporary local spellings in subsequent references. Whatever discrepancies or inaccuracies in spelling found in the originals have been retained, and indicated as well.

Introduction

The Panopticon in the Indies: Data-Gathering and the Power of Knowing

> Panopticon:
> (pan·op·ti·con | \pə-ˈnäp-ti-ˌkän, pa-\; *plural* panopticons)
> Definition of *panopticon*:
> 1: an optical instrument combining the telescope and microscope
> 2: a circular prison built with cells arranged radially so that a guard at a central position can see all the prisoners
> The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

> The problem of control and reproduction of order was surveillance, but surveillance of a distinctively modern kind.[1]
> David Lyon,
> *Liquid Surveillance* (2010)

I. Lost no longer: The House of Glass that is Postcolonial Southeast Asia

This is a book about books, and work on this book began as I was sailing in the Straits of Malacca, heading North-Northwest (bearing N30°W, by the compass) in the direction of the Gulf of Martaban, via the Andaman Sea, as a member of the Japanese Peace Boat team.

Though we were out at sea and the weather was clement, there was little by way of romance and adventure on offer. Thanks to the global positioning system that was installed in every cabin I knew precisely where we were. The GPS revealed our exact whereabouts and also provided us a stream of constantly updated information about our ship's bearing and speed, the weather for the day and the days to come, and the estimated time of our arrival (which, as it turned out, was correct down to the minute). My journey to Myanmar was an enjoyable– though predictable – one that was without any unforeseen surprises, save for the fact that I had packed some toothpaste but had forgotten to include a toothbrush. From beginning to end I was aware of the fact that the

1 Lyon, 2020: 327.

journey I made took place in a Southeast Asia that has by now been thoroughly mapped and charted, and where it is virtually impossible to get lost.

It was also a journey that took place against a wider backdrop of debates about data and information, coming not long after the Cambridge Analytica data-mining scandal, and allegations that the data brokerage company had played a part in election campaigns in countries like India, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal that followed in its wake revealed that the personal data of millions of social media users had been collected and used for political ends without their knowledge or consent, and commentators have seriously begun to question the role of social media platforms in the spread of fake news as well as fanning centrifugal tendencies in society.[2] Meanwhile in China experts had raised the alarm over the manner in which the Chinese government was using the tools of social media and public surveillance to monitor the country's population of 1.4 billion people, and creating a social credit system (*shèhuì xìnyòng tǐxì*) which by 2020 is expected to bring together the combined data of all its citizens including their spending patterns, viewing habits, hobbies and fancies as well as their postings on the internet so as to be able to confer each and every citizen 'credit' based on their social and economic reputation, while also punishing those 'trust-breakers' (*shixinzhe*) who oppose the state or misbehave through penalties such as flight bans and excluding them from luxury hotels or prestige products. China's public surveillance technology has also been exported abroad, to countries like Venezuela whose government likewise wishes to monitor and document the lives of its citizens through tools such as the 'Fatherland Card' and the new enhanced national identity card.[3] Bentham's Panopticon seems to have merged with Orwell's Big Brother state, and as a result of this union we now live in a world rendered known and knowable as never before.

Though some of us may be appalled by the extent to which our lives have come under scrutiny by states and corporations that remain unseen, the point that I wish to put forth in this book is that this drive towards gathering more and more information about society is neither new nor unique in

2 See, for instance: Alex Shephard, 'Facebook Betrayed America', in: *The New Republic*, 15 November 2018; and Evan Osnos, 'Facebook and the Age of Manipulation', in: *The New Yorker*, 15 November 2018.

3 Angus Berwick, 'How ZTE helps Venezuela create China-style Social Control', in *Reuters Investigates*, 14 November 2018.

Southeast Asia. It can be dated back to the 19th century when the region came under Western colonial rule, and when the process of colony-building was dependent upon the gathering of information.

As stated earlier, *this is a book about books*, and in this work I shall present a close and critical reading of the works on Southeast Asia that were written by the men who were part of the colonizing effort and also at the forefront of the kind of colonial data-collecting that would provide the vital information and intelligence upon which the colonies were later developed. Among the works that I shall be looking at closely are Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java* (1817) – and in particular I shall be focusing on his *Regulations Passed by the Hon. Lieutenant-Governor in Council For the More Effectual Administration of Justice in the Provincial Courts of Java* and the *Revenue Instructions of 1814;* John Crawfurd's *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava* (1829); Hugh Low's *Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions* (1848); Spenser Buckingham St. John's *Life in the Forests of the Far East* (1862); Dominick Daniel Daly's *Surveys and Explorations in the Native States of the Malayan Peninsula, 1875-1882* (1882) and Hugh Clifford's *A Journey Through the Malay States of Trengganu and Kelantan* (1897).

What all these writings have in common is the fact that they were written about a region that would later come to be known as Southeast Asia. As I have argued earlier (Noor, 2016.a) the discursive invention of Southeast Asia during the 19th century was a process that was guided by the logic of racialized colonial-capitalism, and where in the course of 'discovering' that part of the world it was also discursively constructed by the men who wrote about it. Along the way Southeast Asia and its peoples were written about in a manner that imbued them with essential traits, and it was from this process of discursive construction that stereotypical understandings of the native Other later emerged – which found expression in tropes such as the myth of the lazy native (Alatas, 1977), the uncivilized headhunter or the violent Asiatic pirate.

Before moving on to the books themselves, there are several points that I wish to highlight in this introduction.

The first is that the books that were written by men like Raffles, Crawfurd, Low, St. John, Daly and Clifford were complex works indeed. These were among the first works on Southeast Asia that were written and published when the domain of Southeast Asian area studies had yet to emerge, and in many ways they were the forerunners to the works that would be written in the following century. But as I have argued elsewhere (Noor, 2016.a) these works were primarily written as *reports* or accounts of places that were then

seen as having strategic-economic value to the Western governments and militarized companies that were seeking a foothold in the region; and they were written by men who were themselves servants of those governments and companies. Though the word 'history' makes an appearance in some of their titles – as in Raffles' *History of Java* and Crawfurd's *History of the East Indian Archipelago* – their own concerns were in the immediate here-and-now. These company-men and colonial functionaries had not ventured all the way to Southeast Asia for a history lesson, and nor should their works be read as such. But if these works were not histories in the truest sense of the word, then what were they? The answer lies in looking at them in the context where they were written, and asking what and who they were written for, which leads me to the second point that I wish to raise.

The second point is that the here-and-now wherein these books were written and published was the era of 19th century racialized colonial-capitalism. And it is worth reminding ourselves of the fact that the 19th century was a time when long-held opinions and prejudices towards other cultures and societies found expression through a gamut of scientific and pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference that helped to rationalize and justify a range of aggressive military-economic-security policies, from slavery to colonialism. Undoubtedly all societies have had ways of viewing difference and alterity, and all societies have had their own ways of seeing, framing and locating the Other. And as Goffman (1974) has argued, such framing can be normative and also natural, and we are often unaware of the frame itself while looking at the object that has been framed and presented to us. The manner in which the urban landscape of the colonial cities of 19th century Southeast Asia was a racialized and colour-coded one was not entirely new, or unique to the experience of Western colonial rule: Long before the coming of Western imperialism to the region the polities of Southeast Asia – from Banten to Ayutthaya – had already employed the practice of keeping different communities apart, differentiating them on the basis of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences. But what makes the 19th century different was the huge military-technological gap that had grown between East and West, which afforded Westerners leverage in their dealings with non-Westerners (Darwin, 2008); and which in time made it easier for the Western powers to not only defeat their non-Western adversaries and competitors, but also acquire their lands and control their peoples. Belief in, and reliance upon, science and the scientific method can also be seen in the works that we shall be looking at later. The works that I shall be looking at were works written in the 19th century that bear the hallmarks of the industrial and scientific revolutions as well as the rational,

calculating and deliberative mindset of the men who penned them. In many significant ways their writing was very different from the works on Asia that were written in the preceding centuries. By way of comparison, a glance at the earlier writings on the Far East by 15th and 16th century travellers like Antonio Pigafetta, Poggio Bracciolini and Ludovico de Varthema would show that they were less inclined to police the boundary between fact and fiction, and had allowed their imaginations to wander further than their feet.[4]

The men whose works I shall be looking at *did* wander all over Southeast Asia, but they did so with a clear sense of purpose. In the process of coming to control the lands and peoples of Southeast Asia, knowledge was a vital factor and the acquisition of data assumed greater importance as part of the colonial enterprise. The kind of modern colonial-capitalism that developed in 19th century Southeast Asia then was one that aimed to not only defeat native belligerents but to also gain access to their lands, open up the interior, and project military power as far and fast as possible. All of this could only be made possible if the colonial power had knowledge of the territories and communities that were coming under their control. To that end the authors we will be looking at– Raffles, Crawfurd, Low, St. John, Daly and Clifford – were also keen data-collectors. The development of colonial data-collecting strategies has been the focus of the writings of Dirks (1988, 2001), Richards (1993), Cohn (1996) and Bayly (1983, 1996). In their works we see how the conquest and eventual colonisation of India was a long process that relied heavily upon the modalities of knowledge-building that was a collaborative enterprise between the colonizers and the colonized. In this work I would like to shift the focus in two ways: By looking at the modalities of colonial data-gathering in Southeast Asia, and to highlight the manner in which such modes of data-collecting contributed to the framing of the Southeast Asian Other (both colonized and free) as the *constitutive Other* to Western identity.

This leads me to the third point that I wish to make, which is that the acquisition of data and information was hardly ever a haphazard endeavour. In the following chapters I hope to show how in all the cases we will be looking at, the role of the author as data-collector and data-organizer was paramount. Be it in the case of Raffles' proposal to create an island-wide surveillance-policing apparatus for the entire population of Java; or

4 See: Varthema, Ludovico de. *Itinerario de Ludovico de Varthema Bolognese*, 1963; Bracciolini, Poggio. *India Recognita: The Indies Rediscovered, In which are included the Travels of Nicolo de Conti, 1492*, 1963, and Pigafetta, Antonio. *Megellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, 1975.

Crawfurd's careful selection of testimonies and eye witness accounts in his report on the state of the Kingdom of Burma; or Clifford's selective emphasis on the geographical vulnerabilities of the Malay kingdoms which he paired with his own critique of Malay political culture – these authors were not only writing detailed accounts of the lands and peoples they had encountered, but were organizing the data they accumulated in a manner that would lead the reader to the conclusion they had in mind. They possessed agency and they knew what they were doing, and data was thus not simply collected, but *curated* in a sophisticated and intelligent manner so as to frame Southeast Asia – and Southeast Asians – as objects of knowledge that could be utilized or even weaponized in some instances. In the writing of these books and the collection of the data that went into them agendas were at work and ends were being met, which is, as Goffman (1974) has noted, what framing is all about. Data-collecting in colonial Southeast Asia was never an innocent process, but one that was informed and guided by grander plans for domination.

As the Western empires expanded further to the East, penetration was accompanied by further entanglement. The linking together of the respective imperial economies meant that the regulation and policing of the colonies would also contribute to the policing of the imperial metropole as well – to the extent that in Britain new laws would be introduced to police the importation of goods from the East Indies, and would go as far as restricting the number of handkerchiefs a British subject may carry on his or her person during the day[5] – while the colonies provided the laboratories where newfangled experiments on social policing and surveillance could be carried out in earnest. But the need to gather data was also accompanied by the growing concern that such data had to be managed. This was a problem that predated the 19th century, and long before the introduction of the modern gunboat, the rifled musket and the rocket that tipped the balance of war against the native communities of Southeast Asia there was already the worry that one day all this information would become unmanageable. (In May 1786 the Marques de Sonora dispatched an urgent directive to Spanish Philippines – and all of the other colonies of Spain as well – where he ordered the officials in Manila to cut down on the excessive paperwork and duplicate copies of

5 See: Parliament of England, *An Act for Inpofing an Excife Duty on Silk Handkerchiefs fold by the Eaft India Company for Home Confunmtion,* 28 July 1814; Parliament of England, *An Act to reduce the duty on Rum and Rum shrub, the Produce of, and imported from, Certain British possessions in the East Indies into the United Kingdom*, 6 April 1841.

their reports that were being sent to the imperial capital, for there was simply too much of it.[6]) As we shall see later what began as an ambitious project of data-collecting and knowledge-building would eventually turn into an unwieldy enterprise that nevertheless failed to stem the tide of anti-colonial nationalism.

This book, however, is not an account of that later anti-colonial struggle and how the Western empires in the East collapsed one after another by the end of the Second World War: my aim, as stated at the outset of this introduction, was to write *a book about books*, and to look at how the works of men like Raffles, Crawfurd and their contemporaries were not merely accounts of Southeast Asian society, or histories of Southeast Asian nations, but also exercises in data-collecting and object-framing – following the arguments that have been formulated by the likes of Cohn (1996), Bayly (1996), Goffman (1974) and McCombs (2004). The aim here is to show how knowledge-building and social policing were interconnected in the works that were written by these men, and how their epistemic claims to knowledge of the Southeast Asian Other were made through their own active participation in the data-gathering process.

This book is therefore not a history of Southeast Asia *per se*, or even a history of colonialism in Southeast Asia, but is really a book about the books written on Southeast Asia, and how those books were in fact some of the earliest attempts to build a comprehensive database about the region while also framing its peoples as things that could be seen and understood from the perspective of the Occidental gaze. If there is one point that I wish to communicate in the chapters that follow, it is that the framing of the native Other that was the outcome of data-collecting during the 19th century was a practice that was intimately linked to the workings of racialized colonial-capitalism, and that Empire was not only built through the force of arms but also upon a bedrock of information that would be used to frame and re-present those who would come under colonial rule. If we are to persist in our thinking that works such as Raffles' *History of Java* (1817) or John Crawfurd's *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Ava* (1829) or Hugh Low's *Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions* (1848) or Hugh Clifford's *A Journey Through the Malay States of Trengganu and Kelantan* (1897) are works that deserve to be considered as pioneering works in the domain of Southeast Asian studies, then we ought to see them for what they are as well: databases upon which the mighty edifice of Empire was later built.

6 The Marques de Sonora, Directive to the Spanish colonial administration of the Philippines and all the colonial offices of the Spanish Empire, dated 29 May 1786. (Author's collection.)

Here I would like to pause for a moment, to give thanks to friends and fellow-travellers who have accompanied me on this journey back to Southeast Asia's complex past. My thanks go to Saskia Gieling and Jaap Wagenaar of Amsterdam University Press who were supportive of this prolonged effort that has spanned three books, all of which were about other books, and which has brought me one step closer to realizing my Tolkienesque dream of coming up with a trilogy in my lifetime. It is thanks to them that over the past decade I have found myself back in my original domain which happens to be colonial Southeast Asia, and for that I shall be forever grateful.

Thanks are also due to Peter Carey, Rachel Harrison and Martin van Bruinessen whose support and encouragement have meant so much to me. Peter's work in and on Indonesia – not least of which was the vitally important recovery of forgotten histories related to the Java War and the period of British occupation of the island – has long been a source of inspiration to me, and a reminder that the historian's task is that of recovery, however painful the memory recovered might be. Peter's tenacity in reminding society of the value of lost histories and the importance of re-membering the broken body of the past is something that I admire and value as much as his friendship. Rachel Harrison's work in the domains of literature and culture were, and remain, reminders to me of the importance of the public domain and how meaning and history can be found there as well, and has shaped my own view towards the power of language and narratives in relation to power and politics. While Martin van Bruinessen's commitment to fieldwork and his enduring love for Indonesia was one of the reasons why I chose to abandon the comfort and consolations of philosophy and return to the region that I focus upon today. Along with the work of Syed Hussein Alatas – that literally opened up new worlds for me during my undergraduate days four decades ago – Peter, Rachel and Martin have been the academic constants in my life, and to them I owe infinitely more than words can possibly convey.

Thanks are also due to my colleagues at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and the School of History, COHASS, NTU, where I have been based for more than a decade now. My thanks go to Joseph Liow, Dean of the School of Humanities; Ralf Emmers, Dean of RSIS; as well as my colleagues Joel Ng, Alan Chong, Ang Cheng Guan, Irm Haleem, Ahmed Hashim, Michael Stanley-Baker and Els van Dongen with whom I have had many a long discussion about the legacy of Empire and the workings of colonial and neocolonial power past and present.

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Germain, Violaine Donadello Szapary, Remi Marilleau, Romain Bertrand, Wim Manuhutu, Marije Plomp, Willemijn Lamp, Chris Keulemans, Dominik Muller, Pablo Butcher and the late Henry Brownrigg. In Japan I would like to thank my friend Haruko Satoh in particular, with whom I have had the enormous pleasure of working with at OSIPP, Osaka University. Not to be forgotten are my academic friends in Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo who have hosted me on many occasions. My gratitude goes to Kazufumi Nagatsu, Koji Sato, Mitsuhiro Inada, Carmina Yu Untalan and the staff and students of the Osaka School of International Public Policy too.

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Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife Amy, who has probably endured the most. Over the past six and a half years I have dedicated myself to writing three books in succession, and in the course of this journey I vowed never to shave until all three works were done. It was Amy – along with my mother – who had to live with the 'U-boat commander-pirate captain' look that I adopted as my public mien for all these years, and perhaps in the future such an ordeal may even be regarded as a form of human rights abuse. To that charge I plead guilty, and to her I can only tender my abiding love as compensation.

Farish A. Noor
Singapore, June 2019

1. Caught in the Eye of Empire

Stamford Raffles' *1814 Java Regulations*

> Unquestionably the British Empire was more productive of knowledge than any previous empire in history. [...] The British may not have created the longest-lived empire in history, but it was certainly the most data-intensive.[1]
>
> Thomas Richards,
> *The Imperial Archive* (1993)

I. *An English government does not need the articles of a capitulation to impose those duties which are prompted by a sense of justice*: Lord Minto's brand of benevolent imperialism in Java

> Lawyer Thoyth: 'You think that all who submit are evil? No. We are submitting to the way the world has become...'
>
> *Taboo* (2017)
> Dir. Kristoffer Nyholm

The British occupation of Java that began in 1811 and lasted until 1816 has been written about and discussed at length by several scholars (Carey, 1992; Hannigan, 2012; Noor, 2016.a); and there exist many accounts of how British power was exercised and projected across the island, culminating in the violent attack on the royal city of Jogjakarta and the killing of many of the inhabitants there. The first quarter of the 19th century was indeed a turbulent period in Southeast Asian history, for many political changes would take place, spurred on by wider geopolitical realities at the time. Back in England life was about as normal as it could be according to the new normal of the Regency period: In May 1812 Prime Minister Spencer Perceval was shot in the House of Parliament by the Liverpool merchant John Bellingham, while George IV busied himself with the latest trends in fashion and architecture. Britain's armies were caught up in the bloody wars on the continent while London dandies like Beau Brummell battled the fashion police on the home front. Tory Prime Ministers were being blown away, Catholics were spooking all and sundry, the Prince Regent's

1 Richards, 1993: 3.

gout and dropsy would only get worse, but none of that would stop the East India Company – Willson's company of the *Ledger and Sword* (1903) – from doing its business abroad.

The Napoleonic Wars in Europe pitted Britain against its enemies on the continent as well as further afield, and in 1806 Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Pellew led a squadron of seven British warships on an attack against the Dutch in Batavia – dubbed by some as the First Java Campaign of 1806-1807.[2] In mainland Southeast Asia the kingdoms of Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam were likewise in turmoil as a result of revolts and the Burma-Siam War that began in 1809 and ended only in 1812.[3] It was in the midst of this tumult that Britain launched its invasion of Java in 1811.

Although the British Army and Royal Navy were instrumental in the invasion of the island – British troops were drawn from infantry units such as the 14th, 59th, 69th, 78th, 89th and 102nd Foot Regiments – the East India Company was also heavily involved and the company contributed sepoys from its Madras Native Infantry and Bengal Native Infantry regiments as well as several of the company's armed vessels. In command of the expedition was General Samuel Auchmuty (1756-1822) though field command was in the hands of Major-General Rollo Gillespie (1766-1814), who would later die in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816. Elsewhere I have looked at the justifications for Britain's conquest of Java (Noor, 2016.a), and how in the course of that occupation its chief architects and beneficiaries attempted to re-present themselves as patrons of the arts and custodian-protectors of Javanese culture and history. But the seizure of Java by the British from the Dutch was not merely a curatorial affair, for it also afforded the commanders and directors of the British East India Company an opportunity to extend their rule from the Indian

2 On 27 November 1806 British Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Pellew attacked the Dutch fleet in Batavia, Java. Although 28 ships were destroyed the bulk of the Dutch force managed to elude the British squadron, and Pellew later withdrew his ships to Madras.

3 The first decade of the 19th century witnessed the rise and consolidation of several Southeast Asian native polities: In 1802 Emperor Gia Long established the Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnam, after overthrowing the Tay Son dynasty. During the reign of Burma's King Bodawpaya and Siam's King Rama I, Burma and Siam went to war. The Burma-Siam War began in 1809, with most of the campaigns being fought along Burma's Tenasserim coast. In December 1811 Burma sent five thousand troops to invade Thalang, but were repulsed by the Siamese. While Siam was engaged in war with Burma it was also drawn into another conflict with Vietnam, over the fate of Cambodia. In 1811 Cambodia's King Ang Chan was briefly dethroned by his brother Ang Snguon, who was helped by Siam's Rama II.

subcontinent to maritime Southeast Asia, and to put into practice the tried and tested modalities of governance and surveillance that they had implemented in India earlier. This tendency to view Southeast Asia through the lens of the Company's experience in India was not unique to Raffles and the occupation of Java. As Hingkanonta (2013) has noted, the British would later attempt to understand rural life in Burma through the same lenses as well, for 'the absence of a preliminary knowledge of, or a simple narrative on, the pre-colonial village system in Burma left the British to look for a model from elsewhere, from India. Consequently the British examined their longstanding encounter with village administration in parts of India and then adjusted it with their impressions of Burmese rural society'.[4]

Crucially, as Darwin (2008) has argued, the extension of Company rule from India to Java meant that Java would be managed in a manner similar to India, and this in effect meant turning Java into a profitable colony that could finance itself and pay for its own conquest and pacification, for:

> India provided its European invader with the resources that could be turned to the task of conquest. Astonishingly early, therefore, the Company created its own 'security zone' and made itself an Indian or 'country' power, competing on Indian terms with Indian rivals. It could use the fluidity of Indian society to its own advantage. Western India had long been open to foreign merchant elites, especially the Parsis who originated from Iran and who came to dominate the port city of Bombay. They were natural partners of the Company 'firm'. In Bengal a new Hindu elite, the *bhadralok*, quickly sprang up to replace the Muslim old guard and supply the educated collaborators on whom the Company *raj* depended. With allies like these the Company could assemble the local networks it needed to squeeze – and eventually suffocate – the trade and revenue of any Indian rival. The effect was to shift the balance of cost and risk away from Britain, the ultimate beneficiary of the Indian empire, and towards the hybrid 'Anglo-Indian' polity that first emerged in the Bengal 'bridgehead'. It was Anglo-India, and not Britain, that financed the wars of conquest. *When London sent troops to help out, the Company paid for their hire.*[5] (*Emphasis mine.*)

4 Hingkanonta, 2013: 108.

5 Darwin, 2008: 264-265.

This expansion and extension of the modalities of economic management and social policing was, predictably, dressed up in the garb of benevolent imperialism and extolled in the most virtuous of terms, as part of a grand liberal endeavour to open up the economy of Java and to usher in a new era of free trade and commerce, for:

> Unlike previous ideologies espoused by European expansionists [...] generic liberalism proved remarkably attractive to some at least of the colonized. It values were, or seemed, universal: they appealed to Indian, Chinese, African and Arab elites almost as much as to Europeans. Here was an astonishing and unprecedented third dimension to the expansive power of the Europeans. It endowed them [...] with a flexible new weapon in the search for allies in the non-Western world. It helped to prise open societies closed to all their other threats and blandishments. It was – or later seemed to its embittered foes – the Trojan Horse of European Imperialism.[6]

The man who paved the way, and who brought the British Indian Empire to Java was Gilbert Elliot, 1st Earl Minto, then Governor-General of Bengal. It was Minto who led the Java expedition, and it would be him who would later appoint Stamford Raffles (1781-1826) as the Lieutenant-Governor of Java after his departure. Soon after the assault on the Dutch in Batavia, Minto would issue his 11 September 1811 proclamation, where he stated in no uncertain terms that Britain had arrived to 'promote prosperity and welfare', and that henceforth there would be some visible changes in the manner that Java was ruled. (See Appendix A.) This was made clear in the preamble of the proclamation itself, where Minto stated that:

> The refusal of the late (Dutch) government to treat for their interests, although disabled by the events of war from affording them any further protection, has rendered the consequent establishment of the British authority unconditional. *But an English government does not need the articles of a capitulation to impose those duties which are prompted by a sense of justice and benevolent disposition.* The people of Java are exhorted to consider their new connection with England as founded on principles of mutual advantage, and to be conducted in a spirit of kindness and

6 Darwin, 2008: 237.

> affection. *Providence has brought to them a protecting and benevolent government; they will cheerfully perform the reciprocal duties of allegiance and attachment*.[7] (*Emphasis mine*.)

Minto proclaimed the end of the Dutch monopoly system, and assured that 'his Majesty's subjects in Java will be entitled to the same general privileges as enjoyed by the natural-born subjects of Great Britain in India'[8] – thereby placing the Javanese on par with the Indians of Bengal who were, by then, subjects of the British crown and the East India Company. The Javanese, he hoped, would adjust to these new realities and readily accept the fact that they were now the subjects of King George; and that they were thereafter bound to respect the authority and obey the laws of Britain rather than Holland. (The Dutch who remained in Java were likewise expected to abide by the new laws set by the British, though they retained their nationality.)

As far as victory proclamations go, Minto's was less bellicose and bombastic, and somewhat more generous in spirit. He declared that the people of Java would 'have the same privilege and freedom of trade to and with all countries to the East of the Cape of Good Hope, and also with His Majesty's European dominions, as are possessed by natural-born subjects of Great Britain'[9], and even the Dutch 'will be eligible to all offices of trust, and will enjoy the confidence of the government, according to their respective characters, conduct, and talents, in common with British-born subjects'.[10] But this boundless kindness and affection did not simply rain upon the land of Java, notwithstanding the long reach of King George and his Honourable Company. For the benefits of colonial-capitalism to be felt, there had to be a means to deliver Empire to one's doorstep.

It was to that end that Minto introduced eight major modifications to the mode of rule in colonial Java: He declared that henceforth torture and mutilation would no longer be permitted in prison, or as forms of punishment; that the death sentence could only be imposed with the approval of the highest authority in the colony; that members of the armed forces would be tried only in courts-martial reserved for members of the military orders. But it was the eighth modification that would have the

7 Minto, *Proclamation*, preamble.
8 Minto, *Proclamation*, article 1.
9 Minto, *Proclamation*, article 2.
10 Minto, *Proclamation*, article 3.

greatest scope and impact upon the socio-economic landscape of Java, for as he noted:

> It being necessary in all countries that a power should exist of forming regulations in the nature of legislative provisions, adapted to change of circumstances, or meet any emergency that may arise, and the great distance of the British authorities in Europe rendering it expedient that the said power should, for the present, reside in some accessible quarter, *it is declared, that the lieutenant-governor shall have full power and authority to pass such legislative regulations*, as, on deliberation, and after due consultation and advice, may appear to him indispensably necessary, *and that they shall have the full force of law*. But the same shall be immediately reported to the governor-general in council in Bengal, together with the lieutenant-governor's reasons for passing the said regulations, and any representations that may have been submitted to him against the same; and the regulations so passed will be confirmed or disallowed by the governor-general in council with the shortest possible delay. The mode in which the lieutenant-governor shall be assisted with advice will hereafter be made known, and such regulations will hereafter be framed as may be thought more conducive to the prompt, pure, and impartial administration of justice, civil and criminal.[11] (*Emphasis mine*.)

That the future Lieutenant-Governor of British Java would have full power and authority to pass legislative regulations, and that these legislative regulations would have *the full force of law*, rendered the office of Lieutenant-Governor the highest and most powerful in all of Java, second only to the Governor-General in council in Bengal. The man who was destined to occupy that office was Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles, who began his career as a clerk in the East India Company; and it was a position that he duly occupied soon after Minto's return to Bengal. With almost no-one and nothing that could check his power in Java, and with the entire administrative-military structure of the East India Company at his disposal, Raffles would go on to issue his own set of regulations for the administration and policing of Java, that would be one of the most ambitious attempts at building a panopticon state in the East Indies, monitoring the land of Java and placing the entire native population in a state of surveillance and epistemic arrest.

11 Minto, *Proclamation*, 8th modification.

II. The Lieutenant-Governor is Watching You: Raffles' *1814 Regulations*

> It is the duty of heads of villages, generally, to observe tranquillity as far as their authority extends, to obey zealously the orders of their superiors, to furnish every useful information, and, in short, to contribute all in their power to the establishment and preservation of a good state of police.[12]
>
> Article 23 of Stamford Raffles' *1814 Regulations for the More Effectual Administration of Justice in the Provincial Courts of Java*

Thomas Stamford Raffles' tenure as the Lieutenant-Governor of Java was a relatively short one, for it hinged on the outcome of the Napoleonic Wars back in Europe, and was thus contingent upon the outcome of Britain's rivalry with France and her allies. As in the case of Britain's brief two-year occupation of Manila during the Seven Years War when Britain was at war with Spain (which afforded Dawson Drake the opportunity to make a name for himself as Britain's representative in the Philippines), Minto, Raffles and the officers of the East India Company knew that their hold on Java was tenuous at best, and could be brought to an early end should the fortunes of war turn against them. Furthermore as Darwin (2008) has pointed out, during the first half of the 19th century European traders and merchant companies did not have that many goods or commodities that attracted the interest of Asians, and were therefore compelled to pay for whatever they bought in gold or silver.[13] A similar observation was made by the East India Company-man John Anderson during his probing mission to the ports of East Sumatra, when he noted that the Sumatrans were more interested in Indian cloths (like chintz) which the company could offer instead (Noor, 2016.a).

Complicating matters further was the fact that the invasion of Java was not as universally popular as the directors of the East India Company had claimed, and back in England angry voices were raised by critics of the company who saw it as yet another instance of England's corporate raiders

12 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lx.

13 Darwin, 2008: 160-161.

being allowed to – literally – get away with murder.[14] As it happened, the defeat of Napoleon and the normalisation of relations with Holland at the end of the Napoleonic Wars meant that Java had to be restored to the Dutch – much to the chagrin of Raffles and his subordinates, who felt that they had done a better job of running the colony.

Among the more lasting results of this brief occupation of Java was the book that Raffles later wrote, and which secured his name and place as one of the foremost experts on Java and all things Javanese, *The History of Java* (1817) – though Raffles' claim that he knew more about Java than any other living Englishman at the time was seen by some as a vain boast, and was contested even during his lifetime. Elsewhere I have looked at Raffles' work and how his *History of Java* can be read as a double-edged text that was on the one hand a critique of Dutch mismanagement and on the other hand an attempt on his part to re-present himself as a coloniser-curator who had single-handedly rescued the cultural patrimony of Java and its history for the world to see.[15] Needless to say, in this makeover process where Raffles cast himself in a favourable light, little mention was made of the killings and lootings that took place as the East India Company's army blasted its way from Batavia all the way to the royal city of Jogjakarta, and how some of the precious Javanese antiquities that Raffles later presented to his British readers back home were literally taken from the hands of Javanese royals and aristocrats who had been gunned down during the assault on Jogjakarta.

Despite the bloodshed and looting that came with the British invasion of Java, Raffles' *History of Java* was an impressive piece of work. Published in two volumes and crammed with detailed images of temples, statuary, figure studies and portraits, the book was also accompanied by an impressive and detailed map of Java that was done by one of the foremost mapmakers of the time, John Walker. But even as Raffles' work made its rounds around London, doubts were raised about the accuracy of his data and the reliability of his sources. His contemporaries – among whom was John Crawfurd, another

14 Farish A. Noor, *Anti-Imperialism in the 19th century: A Contemporary Critique of the British Invasion of Java in 1811*, RSIS Working Paper no. 279, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies RSIS, Nanyang Technological University NTU Singapore. 2 September 2014.

15 In his writings Raffles had painted a rather bleak picture of Dutch rule in Java prior to the British occupation, though some of his criticisms of the Dutch administration were unwarranted and exaggerated. Following the fall of the Netherlands to Napoleon, Louis Bonaparte had promoted Herman Willen Daendels (1762-1818) to Colonel-General and later Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in 1807. Daendels set to work preparing for a British invasion and it was under his supervision that new forts were constructed at Jatinegara and Surabaya, as well as new roads across the entire island.

East India Company-man – found that his accounting of Java's history was wanting and inconsistent, and less charitable critics at the time noted that the author was not conversant in all the languages of Java either. And notwithstanding the broad anti-Dutch sentiment that he expressed in his work Raffles was in fact working with some of the Dutch Indies elites in Java to extend and entrench British rule there. Jordaan and Carey (2017) have shown that Raffles – with the support of his mentor Lord Minto[16] – had in fact been initiated into the Dutch Masonic brotherhood in Java, and the period of British rule over the island could be seen as 'an experiment in what might be termed 'supranational Masonic government'.[17] It was this bonding between brothers that paved the way for 'Anglo-Dutch political co-operation in the governance of Java', and chief among their concerns were law and order, the land revenue system, archaeology and history – all of which Raffles addressed in his *Regulations of 1814* and his *History of Java* that would later appear in 1817.[18] Raffles' *History* was stronger when it came to contemporary facts and numbers, though the question remains: how was all this data collected, by whom, and under whose direction and authority? To answer that question we have to look at another work that was penned (or dictated) by Raffles himself: his *Java Regulations* of 1814.[19]

Forgotten by most save those whose social lives are non-existent and who find strange comfort in staying up late at night reading the appendices of books that nobody reads anymore, Stamford Raffles' *11 February 1814 Regulations for the More Effectual Administration of Justice in the Provincial Courts of Java* is an extraordinary document that reveals a lot about how he and the officers of the East India Company viewed their prospects and the challenge of governing a new colony that could no longer offer any effective resistance.[20] Following the proclamation by Lord Minto on 11 September 1811, Stamford Raffles, as lieutenant-governor of Java, was authorised to issue new laws and regulations related to the governing of the land and

16 Lord Minto was himself already a member of the Freemasons and it was he who brought his protégé Raffles into the Masonic circle in Java soon after Dutch resistance had been overcome. Raffles' initiation into the Freemason order took place at the lodge Virtutis et Artis Amici, which was located at the estate of Nicolaus Engelhard (1791-1831); and Engelhard would later be made a member of the Java Council that Raffles presided over. (Jordaan and Carey, 2017: 12, 14-16.)

17 Jordaan and Carey, 2017: 14.

18 Jordaan and Carey, 2017: 16.

19 Raffles, *Regulations*, 1814.

20 On 11 February 1814 Raffles issued the *Regulation Passed by the Hon. Lieutenant-Governor in Council For the More Effectual Administration of Justice in the Provincial Courts of Java* as well as the *Revenue Instructions of 1814*. For the sake of brevity the former shall henceforth be referred to as the *Regulations* and the latter as the *Revenue Instructions*.

people of Java. The codification of law was of course not something new to Southeast Asia: In 1805 King Rama I of Siam ordered the compilation of the Three Seals Code of Law for the entire kingdom.

Raffles set to work on the project to reform the colonial economy of Java almost immediately. Again it should be noted that Raffles' plan for the development of Java did not fall far from the East India Company's tree: as in the case of India where British colonial-capitalism was built upon pre-existing networks of Indian merchant houses and trading networks (Bayly, 1983), Raffles was hoping to revitalise the Javanese economy using whatever institutions and practices that were already available then. From 1811 to 1812 the officers of the East India Company were sent to all corners of the island to scour the land of Java for statistical data, and this task was supervised by Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Mackenzie.[21] On 15 October 1813 Raffles issued his *Proclamation, declaring the Principles of the Intended Change of System* (See Appendix B) where he stated that:

> The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor in Council has, therefore, after the most mature consideration, deemed it advisable *to establish an improved system of political economy throughout this island*, with the intention of ameliorating the condition of its inhabitants, by *affording the protection of individual industry, which will ensure to every class of society the equitable and undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of labour*; and while it is confidently expected that private happiness and public prosperity will be advanced under this change of system, such alterations and amendments will be hereafter adopted, as experience may suggest, or the improving habits and manners of the body of the people may seem to require.[22] (*Emphasis mine.*)

The *Proclamation* of 1813 stated clearly that the colonial government intended to reconfigure and redirect the political economy of the colony, in order to ensure that key commodities such as coffee, teak wood and salt would be produced in abundance to meet the demands of international trade 'when the trade of Europe and America may be thrown open to free competition'[23], and that the monopolistic system of the Dutch – as well as their toll system, customs duties and taxes – would also be abolished

21 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: cxlviii.

22 Raffles, 1817, *Proclamation, declaring the Principles of the Intended Change of System.* Reproduced in Appendix L, Raffles, 1817, vol. 2.: cxlviii-cl.

23 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: cxlviii, articles 4, 5, 6, 7.

or reformed to meet the requirements of the new free market the British were about to introduce.

But free markets were not anarchic free-for-alls, and free enterprise was only as free as the law would allow. Raffles wanted to open up the economy of Java, to encourage more labour and productivity among the natives, and to invite more international commerce to the colony that was under his care and control. All of this had to happen under the paternalistic tutelage of the East India Company he served, and there had to be a supreme law and ultimate power over the land and its people. That power was the government instituted by the East India Company, and the law was the company's law. It was to this end of creating a *free yet controlled* market and society that led to the new regulations that Raffles would introduce not long after.

The *Regulations* were passed by Raffles while in council on 11 February 1814, and they numbered one hundred and seventy three in total. In his preamble to the 1814 *Regulations* Raffles set out, in broad strokes, his intentions and ambitions. Anticipating his later critique of the Dutch that he delivered at length in his *History of Java* (1817), Raffles noted that the Dutch monopoly system was alien, unnatural and illiberal. Raffles wished to craft a new set of regulations that were somehow more local and organic, and which could be seen and accepted by the Javanese as something familiar to them. In the preamble he claimed that his regulations were based upon 'ancient usages and institutions' of the Javanese themselves, and not some 'new innovation founded on European systems' of government.[24] Such a set of regulations, Raffles asserted, 'would be the most pleasing to (the Javanese), and the best adapted to the existing state of their society'.

Blanchard, Lauro and Bloemberger (2017) have highlighted the particularities and specificities of policing in the colonial setting, and how colonial policing was in some ways different from the forms of policing that developed in the imperial metropole.[25] Though not known for its sterling standards

24 The Preamble stated that: 'The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor in Council being deeply impressed with the necessity of framing one adequate, impartial, and consistent code, for the prompt and equitable administration of justice, in the provincial courts of this island, with a view to give all ranks of people a due knowledge of their rights and duties, and to ensure to them an enjoyment of the most perfect security of person and property, has been pleased that the following regulation be enacted; which, by assuming as its basis, rather the ancient usages and institutions of the Javans, than any new innovation founded on European systems of internal government, may confidently be expected to be, at once the most pleasing to them, and the best adapted to the existing state of their society'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lvi.

25 Emmanuel Blanchard, Amandine Lauro, Marieke Bloembergen, (eds.), *Policing in Colonial Empires: Cases, Connections, Boundaries, 1850-1970.* Pieterlen and Bern: Peter Lang publishers. 2017.

of political correctness and respect for local sensitivities, the East India Company's Lieutenant-Governor was clearly trying to appease the Javanese who were now under his rule and care; and to that end was attempting to present the new laws of the land as something that was not entirely alien to their own native understanding of power and politics. (Raffles laid great emphasis on this point, and at the end of the *Regulations* reminded the colonial Residents that though they were 'authorized to enlarge' upon the terms of the new laws and regulations, they were also encouraged *to learn about local Javanese customs and adapt these laws according to the cultural norms of the Javanese*.[26])

In some respects Raffles was attempting to impose upon Java the kind of colonial regulations that had been introduced by the East India Company in India decades earlier. Following the conquest of Bengal in 1757 legal pluralism was the norm in the parts of India that came under company rule, as advocated by Warren Hastings (1732-1818): Indian Muslims were subject to Muslim laws, Indian Hindus under Hindu laws, while British subjects were governed by company law (particularly after the Regulating Act of 1773). The subcontinent-wide Indian Penal Code was only introduced in 1860, following the failure of the East India Company to prevent and contain the Indian revolt of 1857.[27]

When showing respect for Javanese customs and socio-legal norms, Raffles was clearly following the example that had been set by Governor-General Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805) in India. Cornwallis saw no need to do away with local Indian laws and norms. This form of legal pluralism meant that Indian Muslims would still be able to live according to the tenets of Muslim law as long as their actions did not threaten the interests of the colonial authorities. Raffles did not want to instigate a revolt in Java by trampling

26 Article 172 noted that: 'it remains, finally, to be observed to the Residents, that as the police of different districts must be, in some measure, adapted to various circumstances and localities, they are authorised to enlarge upon these general regulations for the administration of that department within their respective jurisdictions, reporting their suggestions of improvement to government. But it is recommended to those officers to become well acquainted with the ancient usages and institutions of the people placed under their authority; and in submitting their observations, they will be solicitous rather to improve upon the solid foundations of ancient regulations and custom, both acknowledged and understood by the people, than to invent new systems of administration, which for some time must, of necessity, be quite unintelligible to the inhabitants, and which, after the experience of a few years, may probably be found to be by no means congenial to their genius or habits.' Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxvi.

27 It was the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 that finally brought this pluralism to an end, by recognising colonial laws as valid and no longer accepting 'repugnant' laws and customs that came into conflict with British law.

upon native laws and customs, but instead wanted to co-opt the Javanese into his system of colonial administration. Apart from the port-cities of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya – where the company's power was at its strongest and most visible, the administration of Java would be shared with local chiefs (*Bupatis*) and head-men who would come under the direction of the Residents appointed by the British colonial authorities.[28] The land of Java would henceforth be divided into districts, each under the care of a local *Bupati* (who would be answerable to the colonial Resident above him), and then further subdivided into divisions.[29]

Raffles' *Regulations* was an attempt to convey the impression that British rule in Java would be an inclusive affair, and one that opened its doors to those able-bodied natives who were equally inclined to work with their new colonial masters. Articles 7, 8 and 9 of the *Regulations* stated that the Javanese would be free to appoint their own head-men, who would serve as their representatives and who would communicate their interests and wants to their new colonial overlords:

> 7. In each village there shall be a Head-man (whether recognized under the name of *Penting'gi, Bakal, Lurah, Kuwu, Mandor,* or otherwise, according to the custom of the country), to be freely elected by the inhabitants of the village itself from among themselves; the only requisites

28 These conditions were spelled out in the 1st and 2nd articles of the *Regulations*, where: '1. The Resident shall be the Chief Judge and Magistrate in his districts; but the administration of police and justice, in the towns of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, shall, as heretofore, be entrusted to the particular Magistrates and other officers appointed by government for those places', and '2. The *Bopatis*, or Chiefs of districts, and all other public officers, who may be retained to carry on the duties of this department, are placed under the immediate authority and control of the Resident himself, or of his Deputy duly empowered by him. These various duties, whether relative or direct, will be clearly defined in the course of the following sections.' Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lvi.

29 The division of the territory of Java was explained in articles 4 and 5 of the *Regulations* thus: '4. The Residency shall be divided into such number of districts, as extent of land, population, former custom, or other circumstances may render necessary. Each of this shall be consigned to the care of a *Bopati*, or native chief, with such an establishment, as shall be deemed by the Resident adequate to the purpose, and by him submitted to government, shall have received their sanction' and '5. These districts, again, shall be subdivided into divisions, the extent and limit of each of which shall be clearly marked out and made known. Their size must, of course, entirely depend on the greater or less propinquity of the villages they contain, and on the more or less numerous population by which they are inhabited; but, generally speaking, no division shall be less than ten, or more than twenty square miles in extent. It must also be observed, that the limits of the division follow those of the villages; it being quite contrary to the system of good police that inhabitants of the same place should be subject to different authorities'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lvi-lvii.

> on the part of the government being, that he actually reside and hold land in it. Should any of these be found unfit to carry on their duties, or other good objection arise to their being continued in the posts they hold, a representation to that effect will be made by the Resident to the villagers, who will accordingly proceed to the nomination of some other person, who, if approved by the Resident, shall then receive his confirmation.
>
> 8. These Head-men shall, in every respect, be considered as the representatives of the villages, and shall be held responsible for all such acts committed within them, as fall justly under that controlling and preventive power vested in them by their fellow-inhabitants.
>
> 9. This mode of election and consequent power, it must be observed, are no new introductions, but subsist in immemorial usage, and their nature and limits are well understood by Javans throughout the island.[30]

The role and responsibilities of the *Bupatis* and head-men would be spelled out in broad strokes later in the *Regulations*. The *Bupatis* were reminded that they were expected to zealously execute the orders and commands of the government so as to make the land of Java a happy one:

> 83. The *Bopati* will be held responsible for the faithful and just discharge of these his high duties. To him does government look, not only for the *vigilant administration of police*, and impartial distribution of justice throughout his district, but for the zealous execution of every measure that can at all conduce to the preserving of that district in a flourishing and happy state.[31] (*Emphasis mine*.)

While the village head-men were told to see themselves as father figures whose task it was to maintain a spirit of harmony in their respective villages:

> 45 The heads of villages are required to look on themselves, and to act with regards to the persons under their control, *as fathers of families*; to maintain, to the extent of their power, a spirit of harmony and tranquillity in the villages entrusted to them; to curb every approach to feud and

30 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: cxlviii.
31 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxv.

> litigation; and, with the aid of their officers, to interpose their authority in settling, with justice and impartiality, all such petty quarrels as may arise among their inhabitants.[32]

That the native officers were told to adopt the attitude of *pater familias* is telling in some respects, for Raffles' own view of the state of Javanese families (and the role of Javanese fathers) was well known by then. In his later work *The History of Java* (1817) Raffles would lament the failure of Javanese men as husbands, fathers and heads of families, on the grounds that polygamy was common across Java and the Javanese he felt were unable to appreciate the value of monogamous relationships – which he claimed was the foundation upon which solid families and familial bonds were based.[33] By extension Raffles also held a somewhat dim view of traditional Javanese political leadership, and had demonstrated his willingness to use force and violence when dealing with any Javanese ruler or chief who had the temerity to question or resist the advance of the East India Company across Java – as was amply demonstrated during the bloody attack and sacking of the royal court of Jogjakarta in 1812. Even before he issued the *Regulations* of 1814 Raffles had already made it clear that the native rulers of Java were staring at their impending demise and that their powers were about to be curtailed for good, as he had stated in the very first article of his *Proclamation* of 1813:

> *The undue influence and authority of the native chiefs have been restricted: but government will avail themselves to their services in the important department of the native police,* which will be arranged upon fixed principles, adapted to the habits and original institutions of the people.[34] (*Emphasis mine*.)

32 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxii.

33 Raffles had written in his *History of Java* that '[…] of the causes which have tended to lower the character of the Asiatics in comparison to Europeans, none has a more decided influence than polygamy. To all those noble and generous feelings, all that delicacy of sentiment, that romantic and poetical spirit, which virtuous love inspires in the heart of a European, the Javan is a stranger; and in the communication between the sexes he seeks only convenience and little more than the gratification of an appetite. But the evil does not stop here: education is neglected, and family attachments are weakened'. In time this view of the Javanese as lazy, negligent and unreliable would be taken up and repeated again and again in the works of other European and American writers, and the passage above was reproduced in full in the work by the American scientist Albert Smith Bickmore half a century later. (See: Bickmore, 1869: 279; also Noor, 2018.)

34 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxii.

After removing much of their power and taking from them their status as independent sovereigns Raffles regarded the native rulers and chiefs of Java as native leaders in name only. (After all, he had already deposed the Sultan of Jogjakarta and placed on the throne a compliant replacement who was more willing to comply with the demands of the company.) But even puppets have their uses, and as Raffles had stated in his earlier *Proclamation* the colonial government would instead 'avail themselves to their services in the important department of the native police'. If the Sultans and *Bupatis* of Java could no longer rule as real rulers, they could still be used to play the roles of good cop and bad cop in the colonial drama that was being enacted; and it was in their roles as the coppers of colonial-capitalism that they would prove to be most useful to Raffles and the company. (Another area where the Javanese leaders could prove themselves useful was revenue-collecting, and in his *Revenue Instructions* of 1814 that were issued on the same day as his *Regulations for the More Effectual Administration of Justice,* Raffles noted that the traditional head-man system in Java was perfectly suited to the task of collecting revenue for the company.[35])

Having extended and expanded the power of the courts, Raffles' *Regulations* also made it clear that throughout the island of Java it would be the colonial Residents who would have the final say in the settlement of cases and the handing down of judgements.[36] Though the native officers were at

35 On 11 February 1814 Raffles – then based at Buitenzorg – issued the new *Revenue Instructions* of 1814 where he stated 'the necessity of establishing one uniform, equitable, and adequate system' for the collection of revenue across the island of Java. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: cli.) Raffles wished to relieve the colonial Residents of the burden of revenue collecting, and to that end turned to local Javanese systems of collection that he thought were already adequate. Article 11 of the *Revenue Instructions* noted that 'the head inhabitant of the Javan village has, from immemorial usage, been considered to have vested in him the general superintendence of the affairs relating to that village, whether in attending to the police, settling the minor disputes that occur within its limits, or collecting the revenues, or more often its services. For this purpose, his office has been elective, and the powers he exercises entrusted to him by his fellow inhabitants'. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: clii-cliii.) This, for Raffles, was enough reason to keep the village head-men where they were, for 'this simple mode of village administration Government cannot but admire and generally approve of'. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: cliii.)

36 The extension of the power of the court was outlined and explained thus: '89. In the sixth clause of the Proclamation by government, dated 21st January, 1812, provision was made for the establishment of a Landrost's court; but, in the present state of circumstances, government is deeming it advisable that a considerable extension of the powers vested in that court should be given, for the more prompt and effectual administration of justice, it is ordered, that the following sections be considered as an enlargement and modification of that clause, and that in lieu of the landraad therein appointed, there be constituted a court, to be in the future called the Resident's.' In the articles that follow (articles 91 to 119) it is explicitly stated that it will be the Resident who will have the final say in all cases, and who will pass down the sentence in

hand to help the colonial government maintain tranquillity and order in the land of Java, the father of fathers was invariably a white man. Here the Lieutenant-Governor was playing the game of *Happy Families*, though the family he sought to build was a colonial one, and the real fathers were the Lieutenant-Governor and the British Residents who lorded over the rest of the native population.

III. Knowing Java and Policing Java

> He (Leonard Woolf) came to feel that the British were eternally shut out from knowledge of the lives of the Ceylonese subjects by an almost palpable curtain of ignorance and racial prejudice. [...] Yet, for all that, Woolf remained a devout believer in the individualist myth that sustained colonial rule: the idea of the lone colonial officer and sage, standing at the center of a web of untainted knowledge, the man who 'knows the country'.[37]
>
> Christopher Alan Bayly,
> *Knowing the Country:*
> *Empire and Information in India* (1993)

> I believe there is no one possessed of more information respecting Java than myself.[38]
>
> Thomas Stamford Raffles,
> letter to Elton Hammond

Nicholas Dirks (1996) has noted that 'colonial knowledge both enabled conquest and was produced by it', and that 'in certain important ways

any criminal proceeding. The Resident's own judgement and notes will be written in English, to be stored by and for the government later, but copies in the native language will also be made by the *Jaksas*. Copies of all court proceedings would also be kept in the archives of the courts (articles 126-128), and a register would be set up to record all criminal cases as well as the particular details of those found guilty, the nature of their crimes, the sentences meted out to them and their personal details (article 129).

37 Bayly, 1993: 3.

38 Quoted in: Sophia Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles*, London, 1830: 195.

knowledge was what colonialism was all about'.[39] To gain insight and knowledge into Java and the Javanese what was required was a system of data-gathering, and the *Regulations of 1814* were as much about information gathering as about regulating the lives of the people of Java.

Raffles felt that his new system of regulations was not really all that new to the Javanese themselves, and would be easily accepted by them. In the labour of Raffles we can see similarities with the approach of another East India Company-man, Warren Hastings (1732-1818), who was appointed Governor-General of Bengal in 1772. In order to govern the Company's colony better Hastings believed that he needed to know the Indians better first (Cohn, 1996), and in doing so he 'was trying to help the British define what was 'Indian' and to create a system of rule that would be congruent with what they thought to be indigenous institutions'.[40] Bayly (1996) has pointed out that throughout the colonial era 'European rule over Asians and Africans could not have been sustained without a degree of understanding of the conquered societies' and to that end military success was never enough to ensure the success of Empire. What would happen in due course in Java during the period of the British occupation would mimic the military-epistemic conquest of India, where 'colonial knowledge was derived from a considerable extent from indigenous knowledge, albeit torn out of context and distorted by fear and prejudice'.[41]

The strategies and modalities of information-gathering, knowledge-production and framing the native Other that have been studied in detail by Dirks (1988, 2001) Cohn (1996) and Bayly (1996) would be put to use again in the East Indies; and what the Javanese may not have appreciated in full was the extent to which this 'new' system of administration was also meant to serve the ends of policing the land of Java and its people as well. Based as it was on traditional Javanese practices – in the same way that the British system of management and knowledge-production in India was built upon 'the foundations of its Indian precursors'[42] (Bayly, 1996) – the *Regulations of 1814* relied on native customs and norms in order to project Western colonial power and law. Not surprisingly, Raffles' own concern about the

39 Nicholas B. Dirks, in the introduction to Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996: ix.

40 Cohn, 1996: 61.

41 Bayly, 1996: 7.

42 Bayly, 1996: 179-180.

maintenance of law and order appears early on in the regulations he issued, and the sixth article of the *Regulations* stated that:

> 6. In each division there shall be fixed a station of police, to which shall be appointed a competent police officer, and such a number of inferior *Mantris, Peons*, etc. as shall be deemed necessary for the execution of the various duties allotted to his office, and the due maintenance of the tranquillity of his division.[43]

Thus while the Javanese were invited to elect their own representatives, and the elected head-men were invited to work with the new British colonial authorities, it was also clear that this was not exactly an equal enterprise. For the role and duties of the native chiefs and headmen were many, *but chief among them was to keep an eye on their own people and to provide the British authorities with as much information as they could gather on their friends and neighbours*. In the articles that followed, it was clear that the role of the *Bupatis* and head-men was to maintain a watchful eye over their fellow Javanese, and that it was they who would be held responsible for any wrongdoings or insurrections that might take place on their watch:

> 10. The Heads of the villages will receive and carry into execution all such orders as government, either directly by the Resident, or through the medium of the *Bopatis* and officers of divisions, may be pleased to issue to them; and they will furnish, at all times, such oral and written information as may be required from them.
>
> 11. The care of the police, in their respective villages, shall be entrusted to their charge; and for the due preservation of peace, the prevention of offences, and the discovery and arrest of offenders, they are required to be particularly careful that a sufficient night watch be regularly maintained. For this purpose they are authorized to require each of the male inhabitants to take his turn at the performance of this duty; and, at any time, to call on all to aid in the pursuit and apprehension of offenders, or to generally execute any of the other duties that may occur.[44]

From the outset it becomes apparent that the aim of the new regulations was to create a comprehensive database of all the natives of Java, living in

43 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lvii.
44 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lvii.

the thousands of villages spread out across the divisions and districts of the island. To that end the native *Bupatis* and head-men were 'directed to keep a register of all persons under their authority, describing the name, age, country, occupation, size and appearance of each individual, with any remarks that may be deemed necessary. They will also, with the assistance of the village priest, form a register of the births, marriages and deaths, which occur within their jurisdiction'.[45] In the following articles (articles 14, 15 and 17) the *Regulations* state that the native chiefs and head-men are henceforth expected to submit reports to the British Resident every six months, containing not only information related to births, marriage and deaths in the respective villages, but also about newcomers, strangers and armed locals who may be on the prowl.

> 14. These will be drawn up every six months, according to the forms furnished to them by the Resident. A copy of each will be retained in the village, and another will be forwarded to the police officer of the station, to be kept by him as records, and to furnish the grounds of such reports as he may be called on to give in.
>
> 15. *Whenever a stranger arrives for the purpose of settling in a village, or any of the former inhabitants absconds, the head of it is required to furnish immediately to the officer of the division a detailed account of the particulars relative to either circumstances*, who will accordingly take such measures for the apprehension or pursuit of either, or forward such intelligence to his superiors, as the case may require. (*Emphasis mine*.)
>
> 17. *As well heads of villages as officers of divisions are required to keep a watchful eye upon all new settlers, to ascertain, if possible, their several characters, from their former places of abode; and to observe, most particularly, the conduct of such individuals as have no ostensible means of earning a livelihood. They will, too, follow vigilantly the motions of armed persons*, preventing them, as much as they can, from travelling together in large bodies; and, as far as may be practicable, they ought to hinder individuals of every description, but most especially such as are armed with spears, swords, etc. from travelling at all after eight o'clock at night.[46] (*Emphasis mine*.)

45 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: article 13, p. lviii.

46 Article 18 then added that 'after this hour (eight o'clock at night) they (the village head-men) are authorized to stop, and detain in their custody until next morning, all such persons as may,

Article 16 further adds that 'any person producing the express permission of the Resident, shall be allowed to settle in a village; but without this, or unless he can provide two respectable inhabitants to become securities for his good behaviour, he shall not be allowed to do so', which effectively meant that the Javanese were no longer free to simply move from one village to another, or settle in another community, despite being told that Java was *their* land and that they had just been liberated from another colonial power that had curtailed their freedoms.

Though Raffles had stated at the beginning that the *Regulations* of 1814 were based upon native customs and rules that the Javanese themselves had used and grown accustomed to, it is difficult to see just how the new methods of surveillance and policing would serve the interests of the few native rulers who possessed what little nominal power they had left. As the *Regulations* spelled out the duties and responsibilities of the native chiefs and police officers it was also clear that a new mode of data-gathering was afoot, complete with new documents, forms and reports that would be furnished by the British colonial authorities to the native officers.

> 25. The police officers of divisions are to be considered as immediately under the authority of the *Bopatis*. They will furnish to these all such accounts, reports, etc. as may be required, and will act always on the orders received from them, or, of course, directly from the Resident himself.
>
> 26. To the *Bopatis*, or chiefs of districts, they will forward every six months abstract accounts of births, marriages and deaths which have occurred in their division, and the general state of cultivation and population, with such remarks accompanying them as may seem requisite.
>
> 27. Of these and other papers forms will be furnished them, and they will prepare them from the general account obtained from heads of villages, whom they will, at any time, require to supply them with such further information as may be deemed necessary.

by having with them more than usual property, or in any other way, justly give grounds for suspicion. But on a summary examination, should nothing further appear against them, they must, on no account, keep them detained beyond eight o'clock the next morning; nor ought detention at all to take place, if the account they first give of themselves be deemed satisfactory'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lviii.

> 28. On every Saturday they will give to the *Bopati*, or chief of the district, a detailed statement of the occurrences of the preceding week, the crimes committed, offenders apprehended, numbers of new settlers, their employment, from whence arrived, what individuals have emigrated, causes of emigration, and, in short, whatever has happened out of the common track of occurrences.[47]

Later in the Regulations the *Bupatis* are again reminded that they are obliged to submit reports to their respective Residents every six months:

> 59. They (the *Bupatis*) shall, every six months, furnish to the Resident abstract *accounts of the state of cultivation and population* of their districts, according to forms which will be given to them, and accompanied with such remarks as may suggest themselves.[48] (*Emphasis mine*.)

The data-gathering process that was being described in detail in the *Regulations* was one where information travelled one way, from the bottom-up. And not only was the flow of information uni-directional, it was also processed through a bureaucratic machinery that laid emphasis on both regularity and uniformity: reports would be delivered on a weekly or monthly basis, and the data collected would be organised in forms and documents that were standardised and issued from above. The native chiefs and representatives whose task it was to collect this data and pass it on to their respective British Residents were reminded that it was their duty to maintain a good state of policing:

> 23. It is the duty of heads of villages, generally, to observe tranquillity as far as their authority extends, to obey zealously the orders of their superiors, *to furnish every useful information, and, in short, to contribute all in their power to the establishment and preservation of a good state of police.*[49] (*Emphasis mine*.)

And if any further inducement was needed to ensure that the native chiefs and head-men would do their job diligently, the regulations also reminded them that 'their rewards for this will be a certain portion of land in each village, and the favouring eye and protection of government.'[50] It may have

47 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lx.
48 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxiii.
49 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lix.
50 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2, article 24, p. lix.

been the case that some of the *Bupatis* and head-men of Java did earn the 'favouring eye' of the British colonial government, but it was also clear that all of them – native princes, chiefs, head-men and peasants alike – were also now in the eye of the Lieutenant-Governor.

IV. Policing Bodies: Corpses, Prisoners and other 'Asiatic Foreigners'

> It has been the right of the conqueror, since men associated together in civilization, to give laws to the conquered.[51]
>
> *The Weekly Register,*
> 26 December 1812

Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 paid particular attention to the *bodies* of colonial subjects. The new regulations described in the most exact terms what had to be done in the event that a dead body was found, and who was responsible for dealing with it:

> 40. Whenever a human body is found dead, of which it is not certainly known that the death was natural, or even though such illness precede it as might be considered as possibly the cause, such any suspicious circumstances or appearance attend the death, it will become the duty of the head of the village in which this may occur, to take cognizance of the fact; and ordering it so that every thing which remains in the state first found, he shall report the circumstances, without delay, to the officer of the division, who will immediately appoint a commission of three heads of villages, assisted by himself or officers, to proceed to the actual spot where the body lies, and shall make due enquiry into every particular that may serve to elucidate the affair. For this purpose, such evidence will be taken as may, in a way, be thought to bear upon the subject.
>
> 41. When the investigation is completed, the persons appointed for the inquest shall deliver to the officer of the division a statement of what they have done, seen, or heard, and annex to it the opinion they have finally formed of the manner of death, or degree of guilt any where attaching.

51 'Our Fir-Built Frigates', in *The Weekly Register*, Baltimore, No. 17. Vol. III. 26 December 1812: 271.

> 42. The officer of division shall forward this statement, without delay, to the superior authorities; from whom, in return, he will receive instructions.[52]

While the occasional dead body popping up may have been a nuisance, the procedure of dealing with them was straightforward enough: All that had to be done was to ascertain the cause of death; and in instances where foul play was suspected, to then apprehend the culprit behind it.

But more taxing – both to the mind and the colonial government's budget – was the problem of *prisoners*, and what was to be done with them. For the unfortunate thing about prisoners is that they tend to be breathing and need to be housed, clothed and fed as well. The *Regulations* made it clear that in the case of criminals there would be another set of provisions and rules to determine how they would be housed and treated, and just how much money the colonial government was prepared to spend for their upkeep.

The *Regulations* noted that that 'prisoners should not be confined together promiscuously', but rather kept apart, according to the nature of the crimes they are said to have committed and the length of their respective prison sentences. This invariably added to the colonial government's expenditure as prisons had to be bigger and could no longer have 'one cell fits all' type of gaols, and:

> 139. The internal arrangement of the gaol ought to be so ordered, that the prisoners should not be confined together promiscuously, but different apartments be allotted, not only for persons of different sexes, but also for those in confinement for different gradations of offences. For the following descriptions of prisoners, separate wards ought to be formed: Prisoners under sentence of death. Prisoners confined under sentence of the Court of Circuit or of the Resident. Prisoners committed to take their trial before the Court of Circuit. Prisoners committed to take their trial before the Resident. And one spacious and airy apartment should be reserved for such persons as are awaiting the preliminary examination in court.[53]

52 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxi.

53 Article 140 added that 'All prisoners or witnesses detained in criminal cases shall be maintained at the expense of government. But the subsistence of persons confined on civil accounts shall be furnished in the usual manner by the complainants in those suits'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxii.

Article 141 of the *Regulations* stated that it was the responsibility of the colonial government to feed its prisoners and provide them with the necessities of life, but added that the government should by no means offer anything further, and that it would be the Resident who had the ultimate power to regulate the allowance for all prisoners:

> 141. The rate of maintenance must depend on the general price of food in the district where the confinement takes place. *It ought to be sufficiently ample to secure the necessities of life, but by no means any thing further*; it ought not, in short, be higher than the price for which the lowest description of labour can be obtained. On this principle the Residents will regulate the allowance for prisoners, and when settled and approved of by government, shall be considered as fixed, and publicly made known.[54] (*Emphasis mine*.)

Criminals were a problem for the colonial government as they threatened the stability of the colonial economy; while prisoners were an added nuisance as they could no longer work – and were thus no longer productive units of native labour – and had to be housed and fed, to boot. In short, they were not the good natives in the happy colonial family that Raffles wanted to build, but rather a drain on the colonial family's coffers.

Another problematic category identified in the *Regulations* were those deemed 'foreign' to Java (which included, incidentally the colonisers themselves) and how the movement, settlement and use of these foreign bodies could be effectively policed and regulated by law. Here Raffles' *Regulations* had clearly taken a leaf out of the book of the Dutch colonial government before him, and not the traditional rules and customs of the Javanese whose sensitivities he wished to placate.[55] As did the Dutch before the British invasion of 1811, Raffles wanted to ensure that the movement and settlement of 'foreigners' would be monitored throughout all of Java, as stated in the regulations he passed:

> 144 No Europeans, Chinese, or other foreigners, at present settled, or who, in future, may wish to settle in the interior, shall be allowed to reside in any part of the country without the immediate limits of the towns of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, unless they present themselves to the Resident, to be regularly enrolled in a register to be kept for that purpose, and obtain from him a licence for remaining. This licence shall not be

54 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxii.

55 Taylor, 2003: 287.

> granted, unless each individual enter into a penalty-bond of five hundred rupees, that he will abide by the civil decisions of the Resident's Court to that amount; but if this be agreed to, the license shall on no account be withheld, unless the Resident can, and does, give such reasons for withholding it as the government shall approve of. No fee whatsoever shall be given for these licences.
>
> 145 Should it, at any times, happen that a cause, in which more than five hundred rupees is at issue, should come before the Resident, wherein a foreigner living in the interior is concerned, the Resident shall call on him to execute a further bond, which may cover the amount of the suit; and in case of refusal to do so, he shall not be permitted any longer to reside within his jurisdiction.[56]

That such 'foreign bodies' had to be constantly monitored and policed was due in part to Raffles' own belief – then popular among pseudo-scientists and empire-builders alike – in *racial difference,* and how different 'races' possessed essential traits that were unique to each race. The Javanese were seen by Raffles as remarkable only 'for their unsuspecting and almost infantile incredulity'[57], and were harmless enough once their rulers had been toppled and replaced by more pliant puppets installed by the Company. But other Asians were seen and thought of in a more sinister light. Raffles' bore a deep distrust of the 'supple, venal and crafty' Chinese, whom he considered important in matters of trade and industry, but who also had to be kept at arm's length for whatever success they had attained for themselves was done 'without being very scrupulous'.[58]

That the *Regulations* aimed to monitor and police the movement and settlement of the Chinese in Java was hardly surprising when we consider how Raffles felt that 'the monopolising spirit of the Chinese was often very pernicious to the produce of the soil', and how 'at all the public markets farmed by them, and the degeneracy and poverty of the lower orders are proverbial'.[59] In the decades to come Raffles would encourage even more migration of workers and traders from China to other parts of Southeast Asia, but his distrust of them never waned. Another community that Raffles harboured deep animosity for were the Arabs, whom he had written off

56 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiii.
57 Raffles, 1817, vol. 1: 245.
58 Raffles, 1817, vol. 1: 224-225.
59 Raffles, 1817, vol. 1: 224-225.

as a race of trouble-makers, and whom he regarded as a blight upon the Javanese for they 'inculcate the most intolerant bigotry'.[60] (Raffles also lamented the coming of the Arabs to the East Indies for they had, in his view, robbed the region of its Hindu-Buddhist past and were thus also responsible for what he regarded as the decline of classical Javanese culture and civilisation.) Policing the movement of human bodies seemed to be *en vogue* at the time, and was a preoccupation of the state back home at the very heart of the empire too: On 26 September 1815 the 'professional walker' George Wilson was arrested at Blackheath for 'pedestrianism', of all things.[61]

Interestingly, Raffles had a more open and positive view of the Japanese – who had also been trading with Java during the Dutch period – and did not single them out as foreigners who deserved policing; though that was due in part to Raffles' own desire to see trade with Japan expanded in the near future. Elsewhere in his writings Raffles clearly distinguished between the Chinese and the Japanese: in the account of the trade between Japan and Java that was attached to his *History of Java* he noted that 'the Empire of Japan has, for a long period, adopted and carried with effect all the extensive maxims of Chinese policy, with a degree of rigour unknown in China itself. [...] the Japanese trade was reckoned by far the most advantageous which could be pursued in the East, and very much superior to either the Indian or Chinese trade'.[62] Raffles noted that Dutch trade with Japan exceeded the value of 300,000 dollars, while 'their only profitable returns are Japan

60 Raffles. 1817, vol. 1: 228.

61 'Pedestrianism' was a new pastime in England then, as British citizens had more time for leisure and sports. George Wilson was a famous 'professional pedestrian' whose walks around England had gained him a large following, and he was arrested by the police who were worried that his walks had attracted too many spectators. See: McRobbie, Linda Rodriguez. 'How Competitive Walking Captivated Georgian Britain', in: *Atlas Obscura*, 29 June 2017.

62 Raffles, 1817: xvii. Raffles argued that the East India Company in Bengal might also benefit from trade with Japan – carried out via Java – and that in due course such a new trading relation with Japan might open the Japanese market to British products from Britain as well as British India, such as woollens. However in the final paragraph of his report on trade with Japan Raffles highlighted another obvious advantage of renewed trade between the East India Company and Japan; namely the gaining of leverage over China and the Chinese market as well: 'admitting that a connection between Great Britain and Japan might not be attended with all the commercial profits which might be expected from a consideration of the production of the two countries, would it not, *in a political point of view*, be of the most essential importance to her interests in China, which are acknowledged by all to be so important? *Might we not expect from the Chinese a more respectful and correct conduct than has been customary with them, if they knew that we were not in some measure independent of our connection with them?*'. (Raffles, 1817: xxxi. *Emphasis mine*.)

copper, and a small quantity of camphor'.[63] Earlier Dutch trade with Japan however was problematic. Raffles resumed his hostilities against the Dutch in his report when he stated that 'the Dutch, without power and without respect, dictated in the mighty Empire of Japan an arbitrary and extravagant price for their commodities, in the same manner that they did at home', and consequently 'is it surprising that we should find the Japanese having recourse to a fixed valuation (of the price of copper and silver)?'[64] Sensing the political opportunity to gain more access to Japan's markets, Raffles longed to see *more* Japanese traders coming to Java, and this accounts for why his view of them was more positive as compared to his view of Chinese and Arabs.

The residency licence – which could only be granted by the Resident to those seen as 'foreigners' in Java – was a powerful tool for surveillance and policing. The fact that only the British colonial Residents could issue them meant that in real terms the British were the real rulers of the land, able to determine who belonged and who didn't, who could stay and who had to leave. The foreigners who managed to secure these licences were reminded that they now came under colonial law and could be sued and charged in the same manner as the natives.[65] Those who broke the law, or failed to abide by the decisions and orders of the Resident, were reminded that:

> 147 Should any foreigner, after these precautions, refuse to abide by the decision of the Resident, *a report on his conduct shall be forwarded to the government*, and *he shall instantly be made to leave the interior,* and be prosecuted for the amount of the penalty incurred, in the established manner, in the courts of justice at Batavia, Semarang or Surabaya.[66] (*Emphasis mine.*)

63 Raffles, 1817: xvii.

64 Raffles, 1817: xxvii. Typically, Raffles did not waste the opportunity to take a stab at the Dutch when he bluntly claimed that 'the Dutch factory (in Japan) was, and is, in fact a sink of the most disgraceful corruption and peculation which ever existed.' (ibid.)

65 Article 146 stated that: 'After taking out these licences, foreigners shall, in every respect, be considered in the same light as other inhabitants, and sue and be sued precisely in the same manner as the natives'. Article 148 added that 'In criminal cases, where a foreigner is charged with any offence, the Resident shall execute the duties of a justice of the peace, issuing a warrant for his apprehension, examining the evidence adduced, and, according to circumstances, releasing him forthwith, or committing him to a trial before the Court of Circuit'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiii.

66 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiii.

That such 'bad foreigners' would be forced to quit the countryside and return to the cities that remained under direct British control was one thing; but to have a report on their conduct compiled and forwarded to the government was another. The foreigner regulations (articles 144 to 149) were thus more than simply a means of monitoring the number of non-Javanese moving about and settling in the interior of rural Java: they were a means though which the activities of all non-Javanese could be effectively policed, of having personal files and databases built, and for visibly controlling the extent to which inter-ethnic, inter-communal interaction was taking place among all the subjects under colonial rule. (In India the Company's government went even further, by introducing laws such as the Sonthal Parganas Act of 1855 which declared the Sonthal tribe an 'uncivilised race'. Not only were Indians being subject to colonial restrictions, they were also being classified according to a hierarchy of civilised and uncivilised races.)

It is interesting to observe how the *Regulations* of 1814 defined who and what was exactly foreign to the land and people of Java: Article 149 stated the term 'foreigner' applied only to Europeans, Chinese, Arabs and the 'Mussulmen from the various parts of India', and not to other ethnic groups from across the archipelago – such as Malays, Bugis, Madurese, etc. (And by doing so had also introduced a neat division between 'regional foreigners' and 'distant foreigners' that would be further deepened and entrenched in the colonial census used in British Malaya and the Straits Settlements decades later. See Appendix E.) As Ikeya (2013) has shown, the same concern for maintaining neat boundaries and distinctions between 'natives' and 'foreigners' – including other Asian 'migrant-foreigners' – would be seen later in British Burma, after Burma had been brought into the orbit of British India.[67] In the same way that Raffles' *Regulations* had distinguished between 'true' natives of Java and Asians from without the Archipelago who were deemed 'foreign' Asians, so did the colonial authorities in British Burma draw a distinction between the 'native' Burmans and Burmese, and the 'foreign' migrants from India. The latter, as Ikeya notes, were often labelled 'Oriental' or 'Asiatic' foreigners.[68] These distinctions – in India, Java and later

67 Ikeya, Chie. 'Colonial Intimacies in Comparative Perspective: Intermarriage, law and cultural difference in British Burma.' In: *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 14 no. 1, 2013.

68 For an account of the impact of these laws and distinctions upon the other Asian minorities in Burma, see: Chakravarti, Nalini Ranjan. *The Indian Minority in Burma: The Rise and Decline of an Immigrant Community*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1971; Crouch, Melissa. 'Myanmar's Muslim Mosaic and the Politics of Belonging.' In Melissa Crouch (ed.) *Islam and the State in*

in Burma – would impact upon those who were of mixed ancestry and in mixed marriages in particular, as Kyaw (1994) has shown.[69]

But what was also clear in article 149 of the *Regulations* was the fact that inter-island trade among the peoples of the Archipelago was seen as *profitable*, and that profit-making was among the capital concerns of the East India Company's government then:

> 149 It must be understood, that the term here of "foreigners" is intended only to include Europeans, Chinese, Arabs and Mussulmen from the various parts of India, or, in short, the natives of any country that is without the limits of the Malayan Archipelago. *But as there will resort to the coasts of Java, in small trading vessels, very many of the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands, to whom the entering into bonds, or being subject to other such legal forms, would prove a serious inconvenience, serving perhaps eventually to discourage them considerably from engaging in such commercial adventures, which it is rather the wish of this government in every way to promote*; and as by the religion, laws, and usages of this and the various islands in the vicinity, being, both in form and substance, nearly identified (differing only in some few instances in shades slight and of little moment), it cannot be considered as repugnant to the principles of justice, that they be at once held amenable to the jurisdiction established for this island, during their continuance on it; and it is therefore ordered, that they be looked on and proceeded with in manner no way differing from that prescribed for the actual natives of Java.[70] (*Emphasis mine*.)

Here, in the provisions made for the regulation and control of the lives of 'foreigners' and not-so-foreign maritime Southeast Asians, we see the two most important aspects of British colonial rule in Java come to the fore: profit making and social policing. Articles 144-149 were aimed at ensuring that both demands would be met: the restriction and control over the movement of non-Javanese across Java, and the maximisation of trade between the Javanese and the other communities of the neighbouring islands.

The reader should not, however, be surprised to see this happy conjunction between profit and policing, for Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 were, after

Myanmar: Muslim-Buddhist Relations and the Politics of Belonging. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2015.

69 Kyaw. Aye. 'Religion and Family Law in Burma.' In Uta Gaertner and Jens Lorenz (eds.) *Tradition and Modernity in Myanmar: Culture, Social Life and Languages*, Hamburg: Lit. 1994: 237–250.

70 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiii.

all, designed specifically to facilitate the former through the latter. Cohn (1996) has pointed out that 'throughout the history of the Company [...] the best indicator of efficiency of the administration was its capacity to collect 100 percent of the assessed revenues', and for this to happen there obviously had to be a comprehensive database of native production.[71] Again and again the *Regulations* make mention of the fact that the police were meant to *aid* the colonial state in the process of revenue-collecting, as in article 30 that stated:

> 30. They (the officers of division) shall, on no account, exert their police authority in any under interference with the collection of the revenues, that being considered a distinct department, to which they will only render their assistance when called upon under the distinct rules laid down in another Regulation for the guidance of their conduct of it; here it is only considered that they are to lend their aid at such times, and in such a manner, as may be expressly pointed out to them in orders from their superiors. But they (the officers of divisions) are at all times, or a regular application being made to them by the inferior officers of revenue, to take charge of, and give effectual escort to, treasure passing from or through their divisions; and after receipt of the same, they will be held responsible for it until such treasure shall have been by them delivered to the next constituted authority.[72]

And elsewhere in the *Regulations* it was also stated that even the pursuit of justice should not distract the colonial officers and the native workers from their productive labour, for that would mean loss of production and obviously hamper the pursuit of financial gain as well:

> 44. As *it is most necessary that the cultivators of the soil, and other industrious inhabitants of a village, should not, on every frivolous or inconsiderable occasion, be taken away from their labours* to attend a distant seat of justice, where, even though it is more equitably and impartially administered, the benefit of this is, in many cases, quite counterbalanced by *the loss of time and expenses* of the journey and suit, – it is ordered, that there be subordinate jurisdiction constituted, by means of which the distribution of justice will be rendered far more easy for the governing power, and the acquisition of

71 Cohn, 1996: 61.

72 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lx.

> redress will be presented to every one aggrieved, with the greatest facility, and the least possible expense of money and time.[73] (*Emphasis mine*.)

The keywords of the *Regulations* of 1814 were *police/policing, profit, labour, industry* and *peace*: for Java to be a profit-making colony it had to be peaceful, and for it to be peaceful it had to be policed, and ideally it ought to be policed with the help of the natives themselves. For this to succeed there had to be a definitive understanding of who the natives (and who the foreigners) were, and who among them could be called upon to help the colonial company govern their colony. Law was the basis of this government, but it was a system of law that was geared towards the running of a colony, and certainly not a democracy by any stretch of the imagination. Though Raffles presented his *Regulations* and *Revenue Instructions* as a body of rules that were meant to be inclusive, organic and local, it is clear that its author and beneficiaries were the men of the East India Company who were raking in the profits back in London.

The *Regulations* of 1814 expanded the scope of policing and the administration of justice further, and brought the courts and the legal system to the natives themselves – visiting them in their districts on a quarterly basis and meting out punishment to those who failed to comply with the new laws of the land.[74] The native officers– *Bupatis*, head-men, *Jaksas, Penghulus*, etc – were in turn expected to furnish the colony's administrators with vital data pertaining to their fellow native Javanese who, without perhaps knowing how or why, and would have personal files and cases on them drawn up and stored securely in the government's legal and police archives. The final article of the *Regulations* noted that copies of the new code would be made available to the officers of the colonial government as well as members of the native public:

> 173 Copies of this Regulation shall be forwarded to the various officers of government concerned in the carrying it into execution; and translations of it, in the Javan and Malayan languages, shall be furnished to the *Bopatis*

73 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxii.

74 This was made clear in article 152, which explained that 'in order to ensure the regular, certain and impartial administration of justice throughout the different districts of the island, one member of the Supreme Court of Justice at Batavia, and of the courts of Justice at Semarang and Surabaya, shall four times in a year, at stated periods, or oftener if necessary, make a circuit through the districts, under the jurisdiction of their respective courts, for the purpose and trying all such offences and criminal cases within the same, as shall have been made over to them by the magistrates appointed for that purpose'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiv.

> and other native officers. It shall be the duty of these to explain and cause to be made known its purport throughout the country; and for the doing this more effectually, copies shall always lie on the tables of the several courts, to be open for public reference and inspection.[75]

But while it was the duty of the *Bupatis* to explain to their fellow Javanese how and why they were now expected to live by this new system of legal regulation in their own land, it would be Raffles the Lieutenant-Governor, and his fellow Residents, who would be reading the reports on the lives, commerce, labour and productivity of the Javanese who were their subjects. Law and data moved in opposite directions, albeit along tracks that were fixed and clad in iron: the Lieutenant-Governor and his council made the law and passed it down, and the natives collected data about themselves and their land and passed it up. The two streams of information passed each other; and as Java's data was mined and collected the colonial state grew wiser and more powerful.

V. Policing and Profit: Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 as the Foundation of Regulated and Racialized Colonial-Capitalism

> [...] the question of the state is a question of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge; and the classing of knowledge must be underwritten and directed by the state in its various capacities; that all epistemology became and must remain state epistemology in an economy of controlled information.[76]
>
> Thomas Richards,
> *The Imperial Archive* (1993)

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which Raffles' *Regulations* had worked at the ground level, for despite the ambitions of the young Lieutenant-Governor there was one thing that he could not control and did not possess in abundance: time. After Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo (1815) the game was up, and it was a matter of time before Java would be returned to the Dutch. Though he had planned meticulously for the opening up

75 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxvi.
76 Richards, 1993: 74.

and liberalisation of the Javanese economy, Raffles was soon deprived of his coveted colony and was sent packing. In the years to come his other efforts in Sumatra would likewise come to naught[77], and the East India Company-man would spend his final years in England embroiled in scandals, accused of abusing his powers and of entertaining ambitions that were above his station.[78]

But Raffles was a Company-man, and whatever he did in and to Java was done according to the rules and norms that had been set by the company he served. Again it should be noted that Raffles' conduct during the Java occupation did not differ from the norm that had been set by the East India Company in India: Following the conquest of Bengal the Company likewise installed a number of client rulers in India, and was then able to assume formal authority over territories in 1765, which would later be designated 'permanent settlements' in 1793. (From 1765 the East India Company began collecting revenue in Bengal, Orissa and Bihar after gaining *Diwani* rights from the native rulers.[79]) Governor-General Cornwallis introduced ten-year agreements with local *Zamindars* who had been co-opted by the company in 1789, further extending the scope of the company's power and authority. This system came to be known as the 'Bengal system' or model, and would later be applied to other parts of India as well; and one feature of Cornwallis' system was the separation of the roles of judges and revenue collectors, which was later replicated in Raffles' *Regulations* and *Revenue Instructions* of 1814. As Cohn (1996) has noted, in the British cultural system 'the capacity to assess taxes was inextricably linked with law', and what was required in the colonies were 'forms of knowledge that would enable the foreign rulers to frame regulations that would guarantee their obtaining what they though was the just share of surplus of agricultural production'.[80] Though Raffles

77 Following the return of Java back to the Dutch Raffles did not relent in his effort to establish a British presence in maritime Southeast Asia. In March 1818 he relocated to Bencoolen in West Sumatra, and as soon as he arrived attempted to revive the economy. Typically, Raffles began his work in Bencoolen by issuing yet more laws and regulations: *The Times* of London (3 September 1818: 3) reported that Raffles immediately introduced a new law that banned cock-fighting and other forms of gambling in and around Bencoolen; and soon after that the Sumatran Auxiliary Bible Society, led by a certain Reverend Winter, was formed as well. (*The Times*, 10 November 1818. p.2)

78 For more on the scandals that hounded Raffles after his tenure as Lieutenant-Governor of Java, see: C.E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles and the Massacre at Palembang,* in The Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 22, part 1, 1949: 38-52; Syed Hussein Alatas, *Thomas Stamford Raffles: Schemer or Reformer?* Australia: Angus and Robertson. 1971.

79 Cohn, 1996: 58-60, 61.

80 Cohn, 1996: 59.

did not have the time or opportunity to see his Java experiment work, a similar system would later be used by the British in India following the defeat of the Marathas in the Deccan, and in Burma after it was defeated and brought into the British Indian Empire.[81]

Raffles' reputation would only be revived much later during the Victorian era, when he was resurrected once again as one of Britain's great empire-builders in the East; though even then few of his admirers were aware of how great his ambitions truly were. He would be remembered for his work *The History of Java* (1817) which placed him in good stead and brought him into the company of the educated classes in British society. In the same year (1817) James Mills' *The History of British India* was also published,[82] and as Darwin (2008) has noted, the publication of such works 'removed old doubts about the Europeans' ability (and right) to reshape drastically the alien societies into which they had crashed or crept'.[83] But it is Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 that tells us more about how he came to *know* – and by extension police and control – that land and people of Java whom he claimed he had rescued from oblivion.

Though Raffles would later re-present himself as a benevolent empire-builder who had laboured endlessly to rescue a forgotten Southeast Asian civilisation from ruin, and to open up a corner of Southeast Asia for free trade, his main preoccupation was data-gathering and the policing of colonised peoples. So thorough was he in his data-collecting that every square mile of Java was mapped and valued for the sake of revenue-collection, as outlined in his *Revenue Instructions* of 1814.[84] In this respect Raffles was a loyal servant of the East India Company indeed. The complex system of laws and regulations that he laid out for Java mirrored the vast array of laws that the Company would bequeath upon the people of India; and in

81 Burma would later become a province in the British Indian Empire on 1 May 1897, with its own Lieutenant-Governor and Legislative Council that would answer directly to the Governor-General back in British India. Henceforth Indian legislation also made reference to the 'province of Burma' and the laws that were passed in British India would apply to the territory and population of Burma as well.

82 Mills, James. *The History of British India*. London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, publishers. 1817.

83 Darwin, 2008: 246.

84 In his *Revenue Instructions* of 1814 Raffles stipulated that *all* land in Java had to be mapped and valued, and that 'even the smallest quantity of land must be accounted for'. (Raffles, 1817: clvii. Article 52.) Article 45 noted that 'all *sawah* lands will be considered solely as to what quality of paddy they might produce' (Raffles, 1817: clvii), while article 46 noted that 'all *tegal* lands shall be estimated in their produce, at what would be the quality of maize from them were that the sole crop'. (Raffles, ibid.)

the 19th century the East India Company and later (after 1857) the British colonial government would introduce to India an extensive range of laws that covered almost every aspect of Indian social, economic and political life: from the Sonthal Parganas Act of 1855 that designated the Sonthal people an 'uncivilised race' to the Indian Post Office Act of 1898 which ruled that only government-employed postal officers could deliver mail anywhere in British India.

Raffles was also ahead of his time in many ways, for his *Regulations* envisaged a Java that would be effectively policed by the natives themselves, at the behest of the Company that was now their government.[85] It should be noted that all of this took place at a time when the British Empire did not have an effective means to police its colonies all over the world[86], when the United States did not have professional policemen to police its cities[87], and when even the United Kingdom did not have an effective national police force itself: the city of Glasgow had a city-wide police force thanks to the *Glasgow Police Act* of 1800, thought it was only in 1819 that Glasgow had its first police detective (Lieutenant Peter McKinlay). Only in 1829 was the *Metropolitan Police Act* introduced by Robert Peel, who had served as Chief Secretary for Ireland (1812-1818) and later as Home Secretary

85 Prior to publication of the *Regulations* of 1814, the British East India Company authorities in Penang had established a Penang police force on 25 March 1807, based on the Charter of Justice that was granted to the Company there. The force was made up of native policemen led by European officers.

86 As Deflem (1994) has shown, policing the communities of the African colonies under British rule only began in earnest in the 20th century. The Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1878 removed the powers of local chiefs along the Gold Coast and allowed the Governor to introduce new laws instead. But native policemen were often seen as collaborators in the pay of an alien colonial government and the development of native police forces in British Africa was slow. [See: Deflem, Mathieu, 'Law Enforcement in British Colonial Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Imperial Policing in Nyasaland, the Gold Coast, and Kenya', in: *Police Studies,* 1994. Volume 17, number 1:45-68.]

87 In the first half of the 19th century policing in the United States of America was equally disorganised and unregulated. (Harring, 1983; Walker, 1996.) Some cities and towns had local officers appointed to police the environs in the evenings, while in the slave-owning states of the south 'slave patrols' were sometimes organised, manned by vigilantes. [See: Walker, Samuel, *The Police in America: An Introduction*, New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996; Harring, Sidney, *Policing in a Class Society: The Experience of American Cities, 1865-1915*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983; Lynch, Michael, *Class Based Justice: A History of the Origins of Policing in Albany,* New York: Michael J. Hindelang Criminal Research Justice Center, 1984; Gaines, Larry. Victor Kappeler, and Joseph Vaughn, *Policing in America*, Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing Company, 1999.]

(1822-1827, 1828-1830) and Prime Minister (1834-1835, 18441-1846).[88] Peel's *Metropolitan Police Act* authorised police officers to apprehend 'all loose, idle and disorderly persons' who loitered about and who could not account for themselves, and those wandering the streets from sunset to eight o'clock in the morning[89], in the same way that Raffles' *Regulations* did. But the Java experiment was ahead of its time, and when Raffles' *Regulations* were issued in 1814 Peel was still serving as the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Read as a blueprint for a colonial Panopticon state, Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 strikes the contemporary reader as a work that is in so many ways modern. Its preoccupation with data and personal records, its propensity to efface the boundary between the public and the private, and the manner in which it measured human worth (of colonisers and the colonised alike) in terms of economic output, databases built and information accumulated speaks volumes about how men like Raffles believed in the power of information-gathering. This obsession with data-gathering would become one of the features of late racialized colonial-capitalism, and as the 19th century wore on it would contribute to what Richards (1993) has labelled the 'paper empire', for 'the civil servants of Empire pulled together so much information and wrote so many books about their experiences that today we have only begun to scratch the surface of their archive. In a very real sense theirs was a paper empire: an empire built on a series of flimsy pretexts that were always becoming texts'.[90] And this vast imperium of data and knowledge would extend across the globe, from Africa to India to Southeast Asia as well, as Swamy (2011) has noted in the case of the mountains of data accumulated across British India too.[91]

88 The Metropolitan Police Force created its detective branch known as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in 1842.

89 *Metropolitan Police Act*, article 7. See: Lyman, J. L. 'The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829: An Analysis of Certain Events Influencing the Passage and Character of the Metropolitan Police Act in England', in: *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 1964. Volume 55 Number 1: pp. 141-154; Lentz, Susan A.; Chaires, Robert H., 'The Invention of Peel's Principles: A Study of Policing 'Textbook' History', In: The *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2007, Volume 35, number 1: 69–79; and Reith, Charles. *A New Study of Police History*. London: Oliver & Boyd. 1956.

90 Richards, 1993: 4.

91 As Anand V. Swamy has pointed out, 'from the very beginning, Company rule in India *generated an extraordinary amount of documentation.* Policy discussions characterized the nature of pre-colonial regimes and land tenure systems, invoked the theories of contemporary economists and philosophers in Europe, and might even use surveys to gather information'. (*Emphasis mine.*) [See: Anand V. Swamy, 'Land and Law in Colonial India', in: Debin Ma and Jan Luiten van Zanden (eds.), *Law and Long-Term Economic Change: A Eurasian Perspective*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011: 139.]

Long before the crisis of information overload – that would be captured so well in the works of Dickens, such as the novel *Bleak House* – Raffles lived in a time when there was the prevailing belief that information *could* be gathered, and *gathered well*. The crucial aspect of this data-gathering was the notion that the natives of Java would and should play their part in their own monitoring and policing, and that the Javanese would serve as both the providers and collectors of data – an idea that would later be developed by Home Secretary (and future Prime Minister) Robert Peel whose *Metropolitan Police Act* was likewise based on the notion that the police are the public and the public are the police.[92] All of Java was now in the eye of Empire. The *Regulations* of 1814 present us with a utopian view of colonial knowledge-production that could still be managed and harnessed for the benefit of empire-building, and was sustained by faith in the system; a belief that information could be used to make Empire stronger and work better while occasionally sharing a benefit or two with the natives whose lands had been conquered and whose labour had been regulated – and this would be an article of faith among other empire-builders right to the bitter end, as noted by Sinclair (2006).[93]

But irony attended Raffles' *Regulations* as it did for much of his life. And as Saha (2013) has shown in the case of British Burma, law and disorder often went hand in hand in the daily governance of Britain's colonies.[94] The *Regulations* of 1814 paid enormous attention to the production, accumulation and protection of property and capital; and it was to that end that a colonial policing apparatus was built, in order to police Javanese society and to protect the material gains of the East India Company. When writing about the core beliefs and ideas that underpinned 19th century Liberalism, Darwin (2008) has noted that there was always a bias in favour of capital and the propertied class, for 'politics should be the preserve of the propertied, who would exert a wholesome (and educated) influence on the 'labouring poor'.' From this premise it followed that 'it was necessary for property rights and other civil freedoms to be protected by well-established rules – an ideal that implied the codification of the law and its machinery'.[95] So important was this objective that the *Regulations* reminded the native leaders and officers of the duty they

92 Quoted in David C. Couper, *A Police Chief's Call For Reform*, in *The Progressive*, 13 May 2015. Re: http://progressive.org/magazine/police-chief-s-call-reform/. Accessed on 10 November 2018, 25 June 2019.

93 Sinclair, Georgina. *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame, 1945-1980*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.

94 Saha, Jonathan. *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State: Corruption in Burma, c. 1900*. Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013.

95 Darwin, 2008: 229-230.

were expected to perform, and the severe punishment that was in wait should they fail in their task to police their own people and uphold company law:

> 57. The officers of divisions will be held fully responsible for a zealous and conscientious discharge of the important duties entrusted to them, and shall meet with exemplary punishment, in the case of negligence or corruption being established against them.[96]

It is revealing that in his *Regulations* Raffles seems to have been most concerned about crimes related to *property*: the *Regulations* talks about theft and banditry, and warned about the danger of bands of armed men roving about the countryside (and reminded the village head-men to keep an eye on them, wherever they went). But while the *Regulations* were concerned about the thieves and brigands that might be on the prowl across the countryside, they omitted to mention another band of knaves and bandits who had managed to get away scot-free themselves: the East India Company. It may have been fortunate that Raffles issued his *Regulations* in 1814, at a time when the land of Java had been pacified and domesticated. But two years before that it was the troops of the East India Company who were the biggest band of armed men wandering about the Javanese countryside, and it was they who were the most light-fingered kleptomaniacs. The company's propensity for outright theft was most obviously demonstrated during the attack on the royal city of Jogjakarta in Central Java, and the man responsible for that attack was none other than Raffles himself.[97]

The attack on the royal city of Jogjakarta in 1812 was the result of the ruler of Jogja – Sultan Hamengkubuwono II – refusing to comply with the demands of the British colonial government.[98] In the account of the attack on the city that was later reported back in London the Javanese Sultan was chided for his 'defiance' and 'insolence'.[99] Raffles – as well as other

96 Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxiii.

97 While Sultan Hamengkubuwono II of Jogjakarta was forcibly removed from power, other Javanese rulers were persuaded or compelled to support the East India Company in other ways. Some of the rulers of Java were literally bought off by the East India Company, and this included the Sultan of Banten, who was willing to allow the British to map out the districts of West Java (in 1813) for an annual pension of ten thousand Spanish dollars. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: 267.) The island of Madura was also mapped once the rulers declared their support for the British. In the case of Cirebon the ruler declared his allegiance to the East India Company soon after the pretender Bagus Rangen was apprehended and neutralised. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: 274-275.)

98 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, London, April 1813. *Intelligence from the London Gazettes*, pp. 364-366.

99 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, London, April 1813. p. 366.

senior East India Company-men and officers like John Crawfurd and Rollo Gillespie – took part in the assault on the royal palace, which led to the defeat of its defenders, the breaching of its walls and the subsequent looting of heirlooms and regalia of the royal family (Carey, 1992; Hannigan, 2012; Noor, 2016.a). Raffles would then issue a proclamation (on 15 June 1812) where he declared that 'Sultan Hamangkubuana (Hamengkubuwono) the Second is deposed from his throne and government, because he had violated his treaties, and proved unworthy of the confidence of the British government' and added that 'the *Pangueran* (*Pangeran*) Adipati, the late deposed prince, is now declared Sultan of the Kingdom of Mataram'.[100] The reports that were published in London did not, however, mention that members of the Javanese court were later humiliated in public before the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor, or that items belonging to the royal family – which included many Javanese courtly manuscripts – were burglarized from the court, along with assorted jewellery, statues and other items of historical value (Murphy, 2019; Wang, 2019). The British press were wont to celebrate the victories of Empire then, but less inclined to dwell on the plundering that took place in the name of Empire-building, though it could be argued that empire-building was itself a form of thievery on a grander scale. (And which would continue for much of the 19th century, all the way to the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885 that culminated in the sacking of the palace of King Thibaw in Mandalay.[101])

Raffles' *Regulations* had stated that the soldiers of the East India Company would be regarded as legitimate combatants, and that they would be tried in a court-martial for whatever misconduct or crimes they committed while engaged in war. But that did not apply to Raffles himself, for he was a Company-man, and was thus a civilian. And the *Regulations* of 1814 had clearly stated that all foreign civilians – including Europeans – would come under the same law of the land, and that in cases where a foreigner was charged with any criminal offence the colonial

100 Ibid, p. 366.

101 Following the defeat of the Burmese defenders and the fall of the palace of Mandalay (on 29 November 1885), Burma's last ruler King Thibaw was deposed and sent into exile to Ratnagiri, India. The royal library in the palace was burned down in the course of the fighting, and the palace was ransacked as well. King Thibaw and his wife Queen Supayalat were given ten minutes to collect their belongings before they was marched out of the palace, and after their departure British troops looted the contents of the royal enclosure, dividing and selling the items among themselves. Some of the royal regalia was sent on to the museums in London while many other items came into the private collections of officers and soldiers alike. The most precious item that was lost was King Thibaw's ruby, known as *Nga Mauk*. Though some of the royal regalia were returned to Burma in 1964, the famous ruby *Nga Mauk* was never seen again.

authorities would issue a warrant for his arrest and subsequent trial.[102] But in the case of the attack and subsequent looting that took place in Jogjakarta it was Raffles and his fellow Company-men who were the foreigners who were never brought to book. Raffles' *Regulations* were written in a manner that implied that nobody was above the law, though the sacking of Jogjakarta was nowhere mentioned in his new legal code or the *History of Java* that he wrote later. In the same way that his *History of Java* was a selective one that appropriated and foregrounded certain aspects of Javanese history and culture to be showcased while others were relegated to the background, so was his code of law selective in scope – and therein lay the advantage, and immunity, of being the man who made the law himself.

But laws were not the only things that Raffles made while he was Lieutenant-Governor of Java; for he was also responsible for another discursive construct that would endure long after his passing: the image of the Javanese and the stereotype of the lazy native. As we have seen in the *Regulations* he issued in 1814, the *idea* of the Javanese that his pen gave birth to was a complex and ambiguous one, for the native Other he imagined and described was both lazy and industrious, *useless and yet also useful*.

VI. Framing the Javanese as both *Useless* and *Useful*: Native Labour in Imperial Policing

> The great maxim of the English in governing an oriental race is 'never get something done by a European when an Oriental can do it'.[103]
>
> George Orwell,
> *How a Nation is Exploited* (1929)

That Raffles regarded the Javanese as lazy and their rulers incapable was hardly a novel idea. Cohn (1996) has pointed out that the idea of 'native

102 Article 146 stated that: '[…] foreigners shall, in every respect, be considered in the same light as other inhabitants, and sue and be sued precisely in the same manner as the natives', while further on article 148 added that 'In criminal cases, where a foreigner is charged with any offence, the Resident shall execute the duties of a justice of the peace, issuing a warrant for his apprehension, examining the evidence adduced, and, according to circumstances, releasing him forthwith, or committing him to a trial before the Court of Circuit'. Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: lxxiii.
103 Orwell, 'How a Nation is Exploited: The British Empire in Burma'. In: *Le Progrès Civique*, CW 86. Paris, 4 May 1929.

misrule' predominated the thinking of East India Company officials like Alexander Dow, and this in turn provided the necessary justification for colonial intervention in native affairs. Concern over Asiatic despotism would serve as the ideological justification to both military intervention and colonial rule from India to Southeast Asia, as the East India Company presented itself as the power that had arrived to rescue the natives from their own degeneration and ineptitude.[104] Raffles' attitude towards the Javanese was therefore not unique to the man or the place: As the East India Company expanded its sphere of influence deeper into Southeast Asia, the same desire to control territories and populations accompanied their endeavour, and the need for native policing arose. As Hingkanonta (2013) has shown, the British in Burma were just as concerned about policing the territories they conquered in the wake of the First Anglo-Burmese War, and soon after the Company gained control of Arakan and Tenasserim the first colonial police stations were established, to keep an eye on the local Burmese population and to safeguard British commercial interests there.[105] The Company's Commissioner for Tenasserim, A. D. Maingy, would later introduce his own system of native policing based on traditional forms of native governance. As in the case of Java, the British in Arakan and Tenasserim likewise relied on the natives to police themselves, despite their negative view of the Burmese as an unreliable people less inclined towards administrative work.

The project that Raffles had undertaken in Java – via the *Regulations* and *Revenue Instructions* of 1814 – was part and parcel of a wider project of modern state-building that emanated from Europe and extended across the colonies in Asia. For as Cohn argues: 'From the eighteenth century onward, European states increasingly made their power visible not only through ritual performance and dramatic display, but through the gradual extension of 'officialising' procedures that established and extended their capacity in many areas [...] The process of state building in Great Britain, seen as a cultural project, was closely linked to its emergence as an imperial power'.[106]

104 Cohn, 1996. pp. 62-65.

105 Hingkanonta notes that 'as early as 1825, the first 'police' station (sometimes known as *thana* or *thannah*) was established in Arakan as part of the 'pacification of the countryside'. Each police station was staffed by one British official, a number of Indian sepoys, and a few Arakanese. With a total population in Arakan of just under 100,000, the police presence was slight. In essence, the police were to assist the army in suppressing dacoit bands and to undertake beat patrols. (Hingkanonta, 2013: 4-5)

106 Cohn, 1996: 3.

To that end *some* of the Javanese were clearly useful to Raffles and the company; and the fact that he found uses for them is interesting, considering how he would later write about their fall from grace in terms that framed them as backward and degenerate.[107] As in the case of the Malays whom he had written about (Raffles, 1810), the Javanese were to Raffles primarily 'an agricultural race, attached to the soil'[108] and as agriculturalists they were thought to be disinclined towards science and the ways of war.[109] (Thus falling into the category of the so-called 'feminine races' of the East, who would not be invited to perform the martial duties reserved for other communities such as the Punjabis, but who would instead be kept to their 'feminine' roles as cultivators of land and servants of the company – such as the Bengalis of India.[110]) Yet for a people whom he thought were degenerate, superstitious and unscientific Raffles could and did appreciate the fact that their feudal system of local governance was something that he could make use of, as a means of further entrenching Company rule in Java and extending its probing feelers across the island.[111]

The *usefulness* of the Javanese was alluded to again in Raffles' *Revenue Instructions* of 1814 which he issued (on 11 February 1814) while he was based at Buitenzorg. In the final article of the *Revenue Instructions* (article 92) he reminded the native revenue collectors of the importance of their work, and how their reputation and their national character were on the line:

> 92 From the nature of the foregoing instructions, the collectors cannot fail to observe the importance and extent of the obligations imposed on them by the office intrusted to their charge. It is not enough that the government lay down the principles of a benevolent system intended

107 In his *History of Java* (1817) Raffles would state plainly that 'the grandeur of their ancestors sounds like a fable in the mouth of a degenerate Javan'. (Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: 6)

108 Raffles, 1817, vol. 1: 57.

109 Raffles, 1817, vol. 1: 61-62, 71.

110 See: Mrinalini Sinha, 'Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali', in: Donald E. Hall (ed.), *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 29 No. 2, Summer 1997: 367-379; Heather Streets, *Martial Races: the Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture 1857-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004; Meena Radhakhrisna, *Dishonoured by History: 'Criminal Tribes' and British Colonial Policy*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2001.

111 Raffles repeatedly returned to the topic of Javanese taboos, including those linked to places that were considered sacred or dangerous. In his chapter on the history of Central Java, he recounts how and why the court of Mataram was forced to relocate to Kartasura: 'The Javans have a superstitious belief, that when once fortune had fallen on a place so generally as to extend to the common people, which was the case at Mataram, it will never afterwards prosper; it was therefore determined to change the seat of the empire.' (Raffles, 1817, vol.2: 189.)

> to produce the practical freedom which has been bestowed on all the nations subject to the Honourable Company's dominions; it is with them that the application of these principles is entrusted, and *to their temper, assiduity, judgement, and integrity*, that the people have to look for the enjoyment of the blessings which it is intended to bestow upon them. *They have, in short, the national character, as well of their own personal reputation, to support*; and while the Lieutenant-Governor in Council feels it unnecessary to rouse that spirit of public virtue in which it is the pride of the Briton to excel, or to advert to the shame that must follow a neglect of these important duties, he deems it proper to remark, that his most vigilant attention will be given to the progress of the great work which has been commenced, and that it will always afford him the highest gratification to bring to public notice, and to reward the examples of industry, honour, and integrity, which he constantly expects to meet with.[112] (*Emphasis mine*.)

The Javanese may have lacked the spirit of public virtue in which Raffles felt was 'the pride of the Briton to excel', but they could still prove themselves useful as revenue collectors to the East India Company. The Chinese were, for Raffles, crafty and venal, and the Arabs he dismissed as zealots. But nowhere does the *Regulations* entertain the very real possibility that the 'passive' and 'degenerate' Javanese may rise up against colonial rule – as they did just a couple of years before the *Regulations* were issued, and as they would in the decade to come during the Java War (1825-1830). The idea of native revolt seems to have been banished beyond the horizon of possibility, and was something that simply could not happen, or could not be allowed to happen.

The disabling image of the Javanese – as an agrarian people who had degenerated over time – would be further elaborated by Raffles in his *History of Java*; and after the departure of the British in 1816 the same idea would be taken up and developed further by the returning Dutch authorities. For the rest of the 19th century the Javanese would be seen and cast as a 'race' that was both useless and useful in different ways: Useless at science and technology, but useful in the agricultural sector and key to the development of the Dutch colonial economy in Java and elsewhere in the archipelago. Yet as Alatas (1977) and Carey (1981, 1992) have shown, the myth of the lazy Javanese was an instrumental fiction from the beginning, and less than a decade after the British exit from Java the island would face a major revolt led by Prince Diponegoro, known as the Java War of 1825-1830.

112 Raffles, *Revenue Instructions of 1814*, reproduced in appendix L no. II. 1817, vol.2: clxiv.

How the Dutch would deal with the threat of native rebellion in Java was in some ways similar to the manner in which the British dealt with another 'race' that they had discursively configured as passive and useless elsewhere: the Burmans of Burma. Colonial race relations in British India, British Burma as well as the Dutch East Indies were predicated on the belief that there were indeed some 'races' of martial character who were better suited to the rigours of war and the task of policing. In other parts of Southeast Asia that would later come under direct or indirect British rule – British Burma, the Malay Peninsula, the Straits Settlements, North Borneo – the tasks of security and policing would eventually be given to South Asian colonial subjects who were thought to be more aggressive and loyal to the Empire.[113]

In the case of Java the conquest and eventual pacification of the island by the British was achieved through the use of Indian Sepoys brought over by the East India Company, and following the Java War of the 1820s the Dutch would later police the island and people of Java through the use of troops from other parts of the archipelago (Madurese, for instance) and further afield such as the *Belanda Hitam* (Black Dutchmen) troops who were recruited from the Gold Coast of Africa.[114] In Java, as in other parts of Southeast Asia, the stereotype of the indolent and passive native stuck, and this would later serve as the rationale for the importation of hundreds of thousands of other non-native Asians to the lands that would eventually come under colonial administration and policing. More often than not, the local natives – as in the Javanese of Java or the Burmans of Burma – would be saddled with the epistemic burden of an essentialised native identity that confined them to a fixed economic role they would never be able to escape from. (By the 1830s the Dutch would introduced the forced cultivation system (*cultuurstelsel*) where Javanese farmers were forced to plant commercial crops like coffee and sugar as a form of tax payment.) But for this rigidly framed native identity to exist in the first place, data on the natives was necessary as the prelude to their eventual policing. This is where the *Regulations* of 1814 came in: ambitious in scope and even more radical in its ambitions, the *Regulations* were a pivotal tool to the colonial enterprise in British-occupied Java; and in the course of getting to know all there was to know about the natives of the island the *Regulations* also framed the native

113 Hingkanonta, 2013: 9, 48, 62.

114 Kessel, Ineke van. 'The black Dutchmen. African soldiers in the Netherlands East Indies'. In: *Merchants, missionaries & migrants. 300 years of Dutch-Ghanaian relations*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2002.

Javanese in terms that were debilitating and hobbling. It was here, in the intersection between law and surveillance that the discursive construct of the lazy native was born. *Knowledge had been weaponised*, and the native Other provided its bullets as well as its target.

The weaponisation of knowledge would be a recurrent feature of the colonial project across Southeast Asia as the 19th century wore on. As the British, Dutch, Spanish, French and later American powers grew in strength and spread their influence across the region, data-gathering would be the means through which Southeast Asia was discursively constructed as the stage of their new Great Game, and in the course of doing so native Southeast Asians would likewise be discursively constructed as the disabled constitutive Other to white imperial agency. The natives would be persuaded or compelled to spill the beans, and to reveal both themselves and their lands that would eventually become the dominion of others. But there were also instances when the native's voice was deemed inadequate and untrustworthy, and in such cases the testimony of others – more familiar and thus deemed more credible – was called upon. That was precisely the case in the work of Raffles' contemporary and fellow Company-man John Crawfurd, whose account of the embassy to Burma we will look at next.

2. Deadly Testimonies

John Crawfurd's *Embassy to the Court of Ava* and the Framing of the Burman

> The existence of the disabled native is required for the next lie and the next and the next.[1]
>
> Homi K. Bhabha,
> *Articulating the Archaic:*
> *Cultural Difference and Colonial Nonsense* (1994)

I. Stabbing at the Heart of their Dominions: John Crawfurd's *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava*

> The country was universally cultivated [...] (but) the impression left upon the mind of Dr. Wallich and myself, regarding the extent of industry and the amount of inhabitants, was not, however, favourable. There was no bustle, no activity, but a stillness and tranquillity without animation.[2]
>
> John Crawfurd,
> *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Ava* (1829)

To say that John Crawfurd (1783-1868) – the East India Company-man and later servant to Lord Hastings and the Anglo-Indian colonial government – had a low opinion of the Burmese people would be an understatement. The fear and distrust of the Asian Other which Bayly (1996) has so vividly described in the workings of British data-collecting and surveillance in India was also evident in the work of Crawfurd, and may have been the result of his own experience in India before he turned to Southeast Asia.[3] The Scottish surgeon-turned-Company functionary had served in India at the start of his career, before moving on to Southeast Asia where he took part in Lord Minto's invasion of Java (and served as the British Resident at the Court of Jogjakarta after the Javanese kingdom

1 Bhabha, 1994: 183.
2 Crawfurd, 1829: 127.
3 Bayly, 1996: 142-179.

had been defeated and its capital ransacked). In 1821 he was sent to Siam and Cochinchina by the colonial authorities in India, and between 1823 to 1826 he was stationed in Singapore, where he helped to build the commercial colony that Raffles had claimed to have founded. Crawfurd would leave Singapore in 1826, and soon after his departure he would be sent off again by the Anglo-Indian government on a mission to the court of Ava in Burma, to negotiate the settlement of the Treaty of Yandabo (see Appendix C) that was signed after Burma's ignominious defeat at the hands of the British forces during the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826.

Crawfurd's journey to Ava would take him up the Irrawaddy River all the way to the royal capital of Ava, and in the wake of that journey he would publish an account of his trip and the negotiations he undertook under the title *A Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava* (1829). This work, along with his two other lengthy and detailed studies of Southeast Asia – *A History of the Indian Archipelago, Containing an account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions and Commerce of its Inhabitants* (1820) and *A Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China* (1830) – would eventually elevate him to the ranks of the old hands of Asia, and an expert on all things Southeast Asian in particular.

But Crawfurd's writings on Southeast Asia were shaped by his India-centric bias as well as his attitude towards Southeast Asians in general. In his *History of the Indian Archipelago* Crawfurd had made it clear that he was persuaded by the theory of *polygenesis* – the idea that there was not a single human race but rather different 'races' that had developed as a result of human interaction with different climates and environments.[4] Crawfurd 'saw each of the races as distinct with no familial connection' and even considered Asians 'as a separate species to Europeans'[5] (Knapman, 2017). Crawfurd's belief in polygenesis was certainly not unique to the man, for on both sides of the Atlantic polygenetic theory would be propounded by scientists like Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), Josiah Nott (1804-1873) and Louis Agassiz (1807-1873). The American School of Ethnography that was led by Morton would become a powerful driver in the development of scientific racism in antebellum America, with men like the slave-owning doctor Nott arguing that inferior non-white races would be better able to achieve their full potential while in the condition of slavery. Like Crawfurd,

4 Knapman, 2017: 84-88, 89, 91, 92, 110-113, 228, 233.

5 Knapman, 2017: 235, 239.

such men believed in the separation of races into exclusive types, and felt that non-white races should be allowed to develop along their own trajectories (Horsman, 1987; Rosen, 2004; Bender, 2009).

In his *History of the Indian Archipelago* Crawfurd introduced a set of neat racial categories and hierarchies that divided the various communities of maritime Southeast Asia into five distinct groups, that ranged from the almost-civilized to the downright barbaric. In his *Embassy to Siam and Cochin-China* his bias towards the Siamese and Cochinchinese were laid bare. The same could be said of his study of Burmese politics and the people of Burma, whom he regarded as a corrupt and feeble nation, living in 'a land asleep' and kept in a moribund state by the tyrants and despots who lorded over them. Throughout the account of his *Embassy to Ava*, Crawfurd did not spare any of the Burmans and Burmese whom he met and dealt with, with the exception of the Wungyi of Pegu who he felt was the only Burman 'with the manners of an Asiatic gentleman'.[6]

Crawfurd wrote about Burma at a time when Southeast Asian studies was non-existent and when books on the kingdom were few and far between. His work was dedicated to none other than his own monarch King George IV, though it was more a field report to the East India Company and the Anglo-Indian government that he served. Crawfurd's meticulous approach and eye for detail were typical of the kind of writing that was being produced by the functionaries of the East India Company like Stamford Raffles and John Anderson. In the manner in which he organized his data we can see a decidedly rational mindset at work, one that was inclined towards the building of databanks and neatly compartmentalised categories and hierarchies. There were no loose ends in their works and no fuzzy borders either, as the data they gathered was cleaned up and categorised for instrumental use by the Company they served – in keeping with the fastidious mood of the times, when even the vagrants and beggars of London were being rounded up in the name of public order following the Vagrancy Act of 1824.[7] While the peddlers

6 Note: I introduce here the distinction between *Burmans* and *Burmese* to note the difference between the ethnic *Burman* nation who were, at that time, the largest community living in and around the Irrawaddy delta region. 'Burmese' on the other hand refers to all the local native communities that inhabited the land of the Kingdom of Burma, and this included other local ethnic groups such as the Shans, Chins, Kachins, Karens, Arakanese, etc.

7 The Vagrancy Act of 1824 – *An Act for the Punishment of idle and disorderly Persons, and Rogues and Vagabonds, in England* – had stated that 'every petty chapman or pedlar wandering abroad, and trading without being duly licensed, or otherwise authorized by law; every common prostitute wandering in the public streets or public highways, or in any place of public resort, and behaving in a riotous or indecent manner; and every person wandering abroad, or placing himself or herself in any public place, street, highway, court, or passage, to beg or gather alms,

and prostitutes of London were being swept away to keep up appearances, so were errant natives and rebellious rulers being dealt with abroad.

The Embassy to Ava is crammed full of details about the defences and fortifications of Ava and other cities and towns of Central Burma, and Crawfurd wrote at length about the Burmese government's attitudes to British intervention into their domestic affairs. Read with the benefit of hindsight and with the knowledge that Burma would be invaded again twice – in 1852-1853 and later in 1885 – the *Embassy to Ava* strikes the contemporary reader as a prelude to an invasion. But unlike the case of Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 that was issued *after* Java had come under British rule, the question arises: How did Crawfurd come to learn so much about the land and people of Burma, and who were his sources? The answer to that question lies buried deep in the appendices of his work, which will be the focus of our attention in this chapter.

II. *I shall have the honour soon to lay an abstract before the Government*: Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava* read as an Intelligence Report

> (The colonizer) feared their secret letters, their drumming and 'bush telegraphy' and the nightly passage of seditious agents masquerading as priests and holy men.[8]
>
> Christopher Alan Bayly,
> *Empire and Information* (1996)

The *Embassy to Ava* offers the reader a detailed though somewhat humdrum account of Crawfurd's mission to the Burmese court from start to finish. Along the way Crawfurd also included his own observations about the state of the Burmese economy, Burmese society, the nature and volume of its trade, and the manners and customs of its court. The reader would not have to delve too deeply into the text to see what Crawfurd's main concerns were. Apart from some dry observations about some dry fossils that were discovered along the journey, Crawfurd's attention was focused on the state of war preparation of

or causing or procuring or encouraging any child or children so to do; shall be deemed an idle and disorderly person' and could thus be rounded up by the authorities and sent to a house of correction for a month. (See: *Vagrancy Act 1824*, Chapter 83:5).

8 Bayly, 1996: 6.

the Burmese themselves and the condition of their defences. (With the help of Lieutenant Montmorency he wrote at length about the fortifications of Ava and Rangoon, and they noted the weakest spots along the battlements in both cities.[9])

All of this came in the wake of the First Anglo-Burmese War that began on 5 March 1824. Earlier that year – on 22 January 1824 – the Ashanti warriors of the Gold Coast had defeated the British forces led by British Governor Sir Charles MacCarthy, who was himself killed in the conflict; and the army of the East India Company was prepared for a tough and bitter struggle. The war would last almost two years, and covered the Western and Central parts of Burma. Rangoon would fall in December 1824, while the Danubyu and Arakan campaigns would continue into mid-1825. Prome would capitulate in December 1825 and the Treaty of Yandabo was finally signed on 24 February 1826. (See Appendix C.) It was to a defeated Burma that Crawfurd would travel to a year later, and his *Embassy to Ava* was a comprehensive account of the journey to the court of King Bagyidaw (1784-1846; r. 1819-1837).

What is of equal interest in the text of the *Embassy to Ava* is the report that John Crawfurd wrote to the Right Honourable Vice President in Council of the Anglo-Indian government in Bengal, which he sent off from Saugor on 22 February 1827. Crawfurd's report to the Secretary of the Government of India George Swinton was as blunt as its author. He noted that the boundaries between the East India Company's dominions in India and the kingdom of Burma were still unclear and remained unsettled, and hoped that efforts would be made to demarcate the extent of the two polities as soon as possible.[10] Crawfurd was not advocating war with Burma at this juncture but he noted that the Burmese were worried about the future ambitions of the Company and the possibility of more incursions into their territory, for:

> It is the probability of our being their immediate neighbours at Munnipore (Manipur), which has chiefly alarmed the Burmese government. They are sufficiently aware, that from this point their capital and the heart of their dominions are open to invasion either by land or water.[11]

9 Noor, 2016.a: 178.

10 Crawfurd, 1829: Appendix II, p. 10.

11 Ibid. Crawfurd conceded that 'by the strict letter of the Treaty of Yandabo, it does not appear that we are precluded from occupying the Munnipore territory, or from admitting Gumbheer Singh (the ruler of Manipur) into the number of our tributaries; but as no mention was made at the conference of our intention of doing so, the Burmese government has a fair claim to any doubt which may arise on the subject'. (Ibid, 10)

Burma had by then lost all claims to Manipur, which had become an ally of Britain; and according to the terms of the Treaty of Yandabo the British were willing to come to the aid of Manipur in the event of a Burmese invasion.[12] From the Burmese point of view Manipur was probably seen as the bridgehead for a future British advance into their territory proper. And to add to the insecurity of the Burmese government the Kingdom of Siam was then allied to Britain and had been included in the terms of the Treaty of Yandabo too, which meant that Burma was now squeezed between the British to the West and the Siamese to the East.[13]

Crawfurd's report highlighted the fact that in his dealings with the ruler and representatives of the Burmese government he had skirted several issues, including the subject of Balu Island (that was in the channel of the Salween River) as well as the frontier at Martaban. He noted that the Burmese seemed resigned to their loss of Arakan, as 'no question whatsoever had arisen' in his discussions with them.[14] But the Burmese were less inclined to co-operate when it came to the question of prisoners who had been captured in the course of the First Anglo-Burmese War. While the Burman authorities seemed less concerned about the fate of those who had migrated into the territories that were now under British control, they were reluctant to release most of the Buddhist prisoners – from Arakan, Cachar and Assam – who remained in captivity.[15]

12 Article 2 of the Treaty of Yandabo stated that 'His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jyntea. With regards to Munnipore, it is stipulated that, should Gumbheer Singh decide to return to that country, he should be recognized by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof'. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix, pp. 20-21.)

13 In 1826 Henry Burney, as agent of the East India Company, had signed the Burney Treaty with King Rama III of Siam. The Burney Treaty of 20 June 1826 was important as it brought the Kingdom of Siam closer to Britain while the British were at war with neighbouring Burma. Article 10 of the Treaty of Yandabo stated that: 'The good and faithful ally of the British Government, his Majesty the King of Siam, having taken part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards his Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above Treaty'. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 22.)

14 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 11.

15 Crawfurd noted that 'by the English draft of the Treaty of Yandabo, the release of all prisoners whatsoever, European, American or Asiatic, is expressly stipulated for. The Burman version, however, is not so favourable; for as far as Indians are concerned, it provides only for the release of such persons as come under the name of Black Kulas: that is to say, as far as the present case is concerned, of all persons of the Christian, Mohammedan and Hindoo persuasions, being inhabitants of the states and countries lying north-west of the Burman dominions. I much fear that it excludes the followers of the Buddhist faith, who are inhabitants of Aracan, Cassay, Cachar and Assam; composing, in all probability, the majority of the prisoners'. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 12.)

Equally important was Crawfurd's estimation of the state of Burma's coffers. By the end of the First Anglo-Burmese War the government of Burma was saddled with an enormous debt.[16] In his report he asserted that Burma had paid a high price for the war it fought against Britain and the East India Company, and that by the time of his visit (in 1827) King Bagyidaw's government was tottering on the brink of poverty[17]:

> Of the poverty of the present Burman government, as far as my enquiries go, there can be no question. The late King of Ava, by disposition parsimonious, after a reign of thirty-eight years, more peaceful and tranquil than any of his predecessors, had accumulated a treasure, which, for a Burman prince, may be considered considerable. [...] His present Majesty (King Bagyidaw) ascended the throne in the year 1819, and in pecuniary matters is of a very opposite character to his predecessor. He has no passion for accumulating money, and has hitherto levied no contributions; having that object in view as his predecessor had frequently done. During a considerable part of his short reign, he has been engaged in expensive contest; has been long deprived, by our possession of it, of the revenue of that portion of the country which had hitherto contributed the most to filling the public treasury; besides having over and above these causes, already paid to ourselves, with the assistance of contributions from his courtiers, a sum amounting, by Burman estimation, to 3,750,000 ticals.[18]

Elsewhere (Noor, 2016.a) I have looked at how Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava* was written in a manner that presented the Burmese kingdom and the Burmans in particular as a degenerate people who were living under a state of Asiatic tyranny – he had, after all, described the entire nation of Burma as a 'half-civilisation'.[19] The same familiar theme was struck in his report to the British Indian government, when he wrote about the state of the kingdom's finances and revenue-collection:

> The result of my inquiries, of which I shall have the honour soon to lay an abstract before the Government, go to prove that the Burman territory is

16 Article 5 of the Treaty of Yandabo stated that 'In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burmese government to retain the relation of peace and amity between the two nations, and as part indemnification to the British government, for the expenses of the war, his Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore rupees'. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix, p. 21.)

17 Steinberg, 1985: 104-105.

18 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, pp. 12-13.

19 Crawfurd, 1829: 13.

> but very partially cultivated, and thinly peopled by a race of inhabitants who have made little progress in useful industry. The financial system of the government is rude, barbarous and inefficient, beyond what can be easily believed. No regular land revenue, as in other Asiatic countries, is collected, on account of the sovereign, the great majority of the lands being given away in *Jageer* to members of the royal family, to public officers, and to favourites, in the form of pensions or salaries, and a mere trifle being reserved for the King.[20]

Crawfurd's temperament – that periodically vacillated between the bellicose to the irritable – partly accounted for how and why he felt that the Burmese were procrastinating all the time and why he felt that another war with Burma could not be entirely ruled out.[21] (Though he added that 'at present, the Burmese are destitute of the munitions of war, and the inhabitants so utterly indisposed to a renewal of the contest with British power.[22])

Although Crawfurd felt that the outcome of the First Anglo-Burmese War had left the Burmese 'a strong and universal impression of the superiority of our arms', he was also certain that 'notwithstanding, a disposition to renew the contest whenever an opportunity may occur, is seriously entertained on the part of the Burmese court'.[23] It was the King and government of Burma that Crawfurd had the deepest misgivings for, as he had convinced himself of their essentially tyrannical nature and that they were deluded as to their own prowess and capabilities. As he maintained that 'the vain pretensions and arrogant spirit which have so long characterised the Burmese Court, are [...] little abated'.[24] Throughout his report to the Anglo-Indian government this was the point that Crawfurd hammered home again and again; namely that as soon as the Burmese had recovered their losses, they might attempt to strike back at the British at the first given opportunity.

Though he may not have been calling for another attack on Burma, to pre-empt such a Burmese retaliatory attack was among Crawfurd's aims, and his *Embassy to Ava* provided his readers – the King of England, the East India Company and the members of the Anglo-Indian government – with as much evidence as possible to support his view. He even quoted some unnamed 'Burmese sources' who claimed that King Bagyidaw had already assembled

20 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, pp. 13-14.
21 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 14.
22 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 14.
23 Crawfurd, 1819, Appendix II, pp. 16-17.
24 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 17.

a standing army of fifty thousand troops, and was in the process of adding another thirty-five thousand fighting men to his army.[25] As he brought his account to a close, he reiterated for the benefit of his readers the terms of Britain's relations with the Kingdom of Burma and simply noted that that the Burmese were dissatisfied with their present lot; and stated his own view that Britain and the East India Company should have retained control of Rangoon, to place them 'in a commanding military attitude' against the Burmese:

> Before bringing this narrative to a close, I shall beg to refer the reader for an account of our political relations with the Burmese [...] I shall only observe in this place, that the Treaty of Commerce, not less than that of Peace, *ought, had it been practicable, to have been dictated under the British cannon at Yandabo*; instead of having been delayed to a future and distant period, when the Burmese, recovered in some measure from their fears by the military evacuation of their country, necessarily *entertained towards us, after their losses and humiliation, no other sentiments than those of irritation and dissatisfaction*. [...] With respect to our political relations, I may add, that perhaps the best means of consolidating them would have been the retention of the port of Rangoon, and a trifling territory surrounding it, a position well secured by its military strength. I had the honour of suggesting this measure, and proposed to surrender in exchange for it our territorial acquisitions to the south, and the future pecuniary payments stipulated for in the Treaty of Peace; but it was found that such an arrangement, had it been sanctioned by higher authority, came much too late to be proposed to the Burmans, who were sensibly alive to the political, military and commercial advantages of the port of Rangoon. *The benefits that would have accrued from this measure would have been great*. It would have exonerated us from our too extensive territorial acquisitions from the Burmese Government, – settled our pecuniary claims on the Court of Ava, – *placed us in a commanding military attitude, which would have relieved us from all apprehension of annoyance from the power of the Burmese, – given us command of the navigation of the Irawadi, and possession of a port, which, in a commercial and military view, is probably, under all circumstances, the most convenient and useful in the Indian seas.* (*Emphasis mine*.)[26]

That he had failed to argue the case for a British takeover of Rangoon was one of the reasons why Crawfurd was disappointed with the outcome of

25 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, pp. 17-18.

26 Crawfurd, 1829: 370-371.

the Treaty of Yandabo. It was in his report to the Anglo-Indian government that Crawfurd outlined the possible steps that could be taken in the event that Britain would find itself at war with Burma again. In his *Embassy to Ava* he touched on subjects that were vaguely related to the state of Burma's defences, such as the morale of its troops and the competency of its commanders. But in his report to his superiors he identifies precisely how and where a British attack could be executed with the best results, pointing out the best routes for an invasion force, the best roads for artillery, etc.:

> Should the Burmese again resolve upon entering into a war, it deserves to be considered towards what portions of our frontier their hostility will most probably be directed. Considering our means of defence, and the strength of our positions on the Saluen (Salween) frontier, there is, I conceive, little to be apprehended from Burmese aggression in this quarter, while they are themselves on the contrary so open to attack. From all I can understand, the Aracan (Arakan) frontier, which has a strong natural boundary, and few roads or passes practicable for an army, is equally secure.
> *The weakest point of the frontier established by the Treaty of Yandabo is that probably on the side of Munnipore,* as already stated. This, besides being occupied by a feeble state, is at no great distance from the Burman capital, and *may readily be invaded under the most favourable circumstances* to the enemy, either by the Kyendwen river, or by land. A practicable carriage-road leads from Ava to the town of Munnipore by twenty-seven easy marches of six taings, or about twelve miles, each. *I went once or twice nearly the whole of the first march from Sagaing, and found the road, although neglected by the government, easy, and such as would afford no obstacle to the progress of artillery. This is the route by which the Burmans have always invaded the Cassay country, and that which will, no doubt, be pursued in any future attack.* (*Emphasis mine*.)[27]

With the fateful warning of a 'future attack' in mind Crawfurd ended his report with a damning indictment of the Burmese government and a warning that should King Bagyidaw be given the chance to regain the territories that were lost during the war with Britain, another war would be the inevitable result. In his words:

> Should our own maintenance of all, or any, of the conquered provinces be not considered politic, the *placing of these under the government of*

27 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 18.

> *independent rulers, reserving the sovereignty of such ports and places as might be necessary in a political, military and commercial view, will, I humbly conceive, be a measure more consistent with our honour and interests*, with the welfare and happiness of their inhabitants, and even the interests of the Burmese government itself, *than restoring them to the domination of that power, already possessed of a territory far more extensive that it has the skill to govern,* – whose rule over its tributaries has always been rigorous and oppressive to the extreme, and upon whom the restoration of its distant conquests will have no other effect than that of holding out to it the temptation, and affording it the means, *to make new aggression upon its neighbours, and finally bringing it into hostile collision with ourselves.* (*Emphasis mine.*)[28]

Under no circumstances did Crawfurd think that Burma should be granted the right to reclaim the territories it had lost – for they were part of 'a territory far more extensive that it has the skill to govern'; and that it would be better to install a string of pliant, puppet rulers to mind the buffer zones that the Anglo-Indian Empire had created around it – as 'a measure more consistent with our honour and interests'. The 'hostile collision' he warned about would indeed happen, during the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852-1853, as British power grew while Burmese power waned. But what concerned Crawfurd at the time was his account of the state of Burma, and for that he needed information.

III. *Who Can I Trust?* John Crawfurd's Search for Reliable Data from Reliable Witnesses

> There is no confidence, no faith, to be placed in the Burmans, from the highest to the lowest rank.[29]
>
> Testimony of John Laird,
> In Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*

John Crawfurd and Stamford Raffles were both servants of the East India Company, a militarised commercial entity that operated according to the logic of racialized colonial-capitalism. As such their presence in Southeast Asia was not an accident, and they did not come to the East

28 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, pp. 19-20.
29 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 41.

Indies to sample the native cuisine or pen some quaint sketches for their scrapbooks. The arrival and expansion of the East India Company across both mainland and maritime Southeast Asia was a military-commercial venture that on many occasions led to bloodshed and conquest (Carey, 1992), and prior to the conquest of the lands of Southeast Asia some justification had to be drummed up to legitimise the actions of the Company. The discursive construction of Southeast Asia as a land of plenty and a zone for future exploitation was rationalised through the use of a range of tropes and stereotypes of the native Other – be it in the form of the 'lazy Javanese', the 'piratical Malay' or the 'feeble Burman'. This is not to say that men like Crawfurd invented racism on their own; for whatever bias and prejudice that can be read off the pages of his works were symptomatic of the deeper, institutionalised racism that was already at work in the company he served.

There were, however, occasions when the use of such disabling stereotypes of the native Other proved to be potentially self-defeating. In the case of Raffles' attitude towards the Javanese we have seen how the Lieutenant-Governor of Java would have to reconcile his idea of Javanese indolence and laziness with the need for native policing and data-gathering – leading to the somewhat ambiguous characterisation of the Javanese as being both useless and useful at the same time. But Raffles had begun his data-gathering project in a Java that had already come under the heel of the East India Company, and where the local rulers had been deposed or bought over. Crawfurd, on the other hand, was attempting to gather information about Burma while the Burmese ruler and government were still functioning, and when native Burmans were not about to do him any favours. Convinced as he was that all the Burmese courtiers and officials he met were trying to do their utmost to stall his progress and scuttle his attempt to reach a settlement to the Treaty of Yandabo, Crawfurd made it clear in both his *Embassy to the Court of Ava* and his report to the Anglo-Indian government that there was little trust on both sides. So *who* could he trust?

It is interesting to note how Crawfurd changes tack in his *Embassy to the Court of Ava*: earlier in his *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820) he had collected data from a variety of sources, citing local texts and local knowledge as well, in the same manner that Raffles had collected data via his network of native informants for his *History of Java* (1817) – a practice which, as we have seen earlier, began with Britain's involvement in Indian affairs and which was the result of British power insinuating itself into the networks of local Moghul data-gathering and culture in

the subcontinent as Bayly (1996) has described so well.[30] In the *Embassy to the Court of Ava* however, the informants Crawfurd chose to interview were non-Burmans/Burmese, and many of them harboured similar misgivings towards the Burmans as he did. As it turns out, among the most important sources of information that Crawfurd turned to were the few Europeans and Americans who happened to be in Burma at the time. Crawfurd had noted in his report that the Burmese had captured a number of European and American prisoners during and after the war; and that some of these Western prisoners and residents had attempted, through devices of their own, to persuade the Burmese government to accept the terms of the Treaty of Yandabo – if for no other reason than to buy the ruler of Burma some time before he could make his country great again.[31]

There appears to be a curious disconnect between Crawfurd's report to the Anglo-Indian government and the testimonies that he collected and reproduced in the appendices of the *Embassy to Ava*. For on the one hand Crawfurd clearly distrusted the Burmese ruler and government; but on the other hand much of the evidence that he brought together to make his case was based on the testimonies of European residents and prisoners in Burma, of whom he also harboured a low opinion. He stated so in the most explicit terms when he wrote that:

> The extreme jealousy which exists on the part of the (Burmese) Government and its officers towards Europeans of every denomination, and the illiberal and parsimonious manner in which they were treated, will always exclude persons of character and talent, capable of imparting to their troops any respectable share of European discipline and tactics upon entering their service; *and the few foreigners who may be content to remain among them under any circumstances, will generally therefore consist of worthless characters of the lowest order.* (*Emphasis mine.*)[32]

Though he regarded these Europeans as a skilamalink crew of ne'er-do-wells, some of these 'worthless characters of the lowest order' would be

30 Bayly, 1996: 56-96,

31 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 17.

32 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 18. Crawfurd had earlier noted that the Burmese were so desperate for help that they were willing to take in European and Indian deserters as well, to serve as soldiers, private servants and artillery crews. (Ibid, p. 17.)

the ones who would furnish Crawfurd with the information he needed about the state of Burmese society and government before and during the war. To that end he made the effort to interview some of the European and American prisoners at Rangoon in May 1826, shortly after the cessation of hostilities.[33] As he noted in the introduction of Appendix X in his *Embassy to Ava*, the testimonies of these Westerners were quite informative, and:

> [...] illustrate in so interesting and so striking a manner, the character of the Burmese and their Government, as well as the history and incidents of the war. Several of the parties examined, it will soon be discovered were individuals of much acuteness and intelligence; and all of them were, not only well acquainted with the country and its people, but had been placed under circumstances, in many respects, quite favourable.[34]

Thus it emerged that even the most worthless characters were worth something after all: For here Crawfurd was speaking to fellow Englishmen (along with some Continental Europeans and Americans) who were at least white and Christian as he. None of the prisoners he met were members of the East India Company or functionaries of the Anglo-Indian government, but they were not Burmese either, and that seemed to count the most. It was precisely their subject-positions as non-Burmans that made them useful, for they would be able to provide Crawfurd with an outsider's view of the internal workings of Burma. The depositions of the English and European prisoners were put together in appendix X, tucked between Crawfurd's short vocabulary of the Burman, Arakan, Karen and Kayan languages and appendix XI which features a brief elaboration of the Burman-Buddhist understanding of Nirvana. Forty pages in length, it was the longest and most elaborate of the appendices in his *Embassy to Ava*.[35] And in the course of his interviews with the former prisoners it can be seen how their attitudes and opinions about the Burmans matched Crawfurd's own, adding to the confirmation bias in the echo chamber from which Crawfurd's own polished narrative would eventually emerge.

33 All the English merchants were rounded up and arrested on 28 May 1824, and shortly after all American merchants were arrested on 8 June 1824.

34 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 37.

35 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 37-76.

III.A. *Our Man in Rangoon*: The Merchant-turned-Informant John Laird

> By means of small presents, almost any intelligence might be obtained.[36]
>
> Testimony of John Laird,
> In Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*

The first testimony featured in Crawfurd's Appendix X is that of the British merchant and commercial agent John Laird, who hailed from Forfar, County Angus, Scotland.[37] Laird had arrived in Rangoon in March 1820, as commander of the merchant vessel *Mohamed Shah*. With the exception of a short visit to Calcutta that lasted two months, he had been in Burma ever since (1820-1826). According to his testimony Laird had been quite successful – he was a teak merchant and had secured himself a petty title from Prince Mendagi of Sarawaddy that enabled him to build a small monopoly for himself, dealing in teak and other agricultural products of the Sarawaddy region.[38] During his time in Burma he had ample opportunity to learn more about the life of the kingdom's rulers, and had transacted many dealings with members of the court and aristocracy. At the start of the Anglo-Burmese War however, he was apprehended and later kept a prisoner, until his release when hostilities ceased.

Laird's testimony was indeed informative, as he explained how easy it was for him to procure a title from the Burmese princes, how common bribery was practiced by the local officials, how the Burmese were aware of the scale and scope of British trade that was taking place in Bengal to the West, and how many non-Burmese foreigners there were in the capital of Ava at the time. According to him almost a quarter of the capital's population was then made up of Chinese workers and merchants, and there were many non-Burmese Muslims and Hindus in the city as well.[39]

Judging by his own testimony Laird's captivity during the war was hardly a pleasant experience: He had been clapped in irons, stripped down to his drawers, lost his property, was forced to beg for food and to pay bribes to his tormentors. One of his fellow captives had died of dysentery in prison while another had died of heat exhaustion when they were forced

36 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 41.
37 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 37-47.
38 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 38.
39 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 40.

to march in the sun from one gaol to another.[40] But Crawfurd was an East India Company-man down to his bootstraps and notwithstanding Laird's sunburned skin and blistered feet, it was economic intelligence that Crawfurd was after. Thus it does not come as a surprise that much of the interview was focused on the state of Burma's economy and the goods and products that were being traded by the Burmese before the war. Crawfurd pressed for more economic data, and in the course of his interview with Laird learned that in times of peace Burma traded rice, grain, cotton, indigo, cardamom, black pepper, aloe, sugar, saltpetre, salt, teak, lacquer, kutch (terra japonica), areca, damar, sapan-wood, wood and earth-oil, honey, bees' wax, ivory, rubies and sapphires; to which could also be added iron, copper, lead, gold, silver, antimony, white marble, limestone and coal.[41] Laird added that the Burmese government had prohibited the export of sugar abroad though Chinese merchants were keen to purchase it.

Crawfurd was also keen to learn more about the extent of China's trade with Burma, and was informed by Laird that the main Chinese imports into the kingdom then were copper, orpiment, quicksilver, vermillion, iron-pans and iron utensils, silver, gold, rhubarb, honey, raw silk, spirits, hams, musk, dried fruits, as well as dogs and pheasants – though perhaps the most important of these imports was black Chinese tea, 'of different qualities, made up in round cakes or balls, some of it of very fine flavour'.[42]

Apart from economic intelligence Crawfurd was also interested in political intelligence, particularly information that would be of strategic and military importance to the ever-growing East India Company. Crawfurd's interview with Laird dwelt on matters related to Burma's military capabilities and the attitude of the Burmese ruler and his courtiers towards the British presence in Bengal next door. Laird himself had stated that getting information from members of the court was not a difficult matter for him, as he pointed out in his interview with Crawfurd:

> Q. Is it easy to gain information of the transactions of the Court of Ava?
> A. *Yes, very easy. By means of small presents, almost any intelligence might be obtained.* A piece of book-muslin, or leno, or a handkerchief-piece of a new pattern, will often do the business. (*Emphasis mine*.)[43]

40 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 46-47.
41 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 42.
42 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 43.
43 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 41.

Crawfurd was interested in learning how and why the government of Burma was inclined towards war in the first place, and Laird's explanation touched on how the Burmese regarded themselves as a superior military force on land:

> Q. Did you ever hear his Highness express his opinion concerning a war with the British?
> A. Yes; when I arrived at Ava on the 4th of March, 1824, I waited upon the Prince of Sarawadi. Upon that occasion his Highness asked me if I knew of a Mr. Richardson, who had lately quitted Ava. [...] The reason of his Highness putting this question was, that the Court, on the information of certain Mohammedan merchants, had been led to suspect Mr. Richardson to be a spy dispatched to Bengal by Mr. Gouger with information for the British Government. His Highness then observed. "There are two chiefs of Assam and Cassay, who have run off into the British territory; do you think the English Government will deliver them up?" I said, it was contrary to the custom of the English to deliver up any person who had sought their protection. *The Prince, on hearing this, said, "If they will not deliver them up, we will go to war and take them by force. Do you think we can beat the English?"* I said, "No"; to which the Prince replied, *"See how we beat them at Coxes Bazaar. You are strong by sea, but not by land. We are skilled at making trenches and abbatis, which the English do not understand."* (*Emphasis mine*.)[44]

Following this revelation Crawfurd pressed Laird further, seeking a confirmation from the merchant that the entire court of Ava was disposed towards war with the Company:

> Q. Are you of opinion that the Burmese Court and people, generally, were anxious for a war with the English?
> A. *Yes, I am of opinion that, from the King to the beggar, they were hot for a war with the English*. They looked upon the English as a parcel of merchants, and considered the Governor-General to be of no higher rank or consequence than the Viceroy of Rangoon. (*Emphasis mine*.)[45]

As to what Burma hoped to gain from a war with the East India Company and the Anglo-Indian government, Laird claimed that the Burmese were

44 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 38-39.
45 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 39.

confident that they would prevail in the event of such a conflict, and that their ultimate goal was to conquer all of Bengal for themselves:

> Q. What advantage do you consider the Burmans expected to derive from a war with the English?
> A. *They expected to conquer Bengal, to plunder it, and extend their territories to the Westward*.
> Q. Did you ever hear that the Burmans, before the war, were alarmed at the power of the British Government in India?
> A. No, I never heard so. *I have always considered that the Burmans had a contempt for the British*, whom they considered as merchants who had hired a few mercenary soldiers to fight for them.
> Q. Were they aware of the wealth of Calcutta and Bengal?
> A. Yes, certainly: they judged of it from the reports of their own merchants who visited Calcutta, as well as by the large investments brought to Rangoon by British merchants.
> Q. Do you consider that this circumstance was any inducement to a desire for war with the English?
> A. *Yes, certainly*. (*Emphasis mine*.)[46]

As Crawfurd's interview progressed, his focus was eventually directed to King Bagyidaw himself, whom he regarded and presented as the tyrant of Burma. Elsewhere in his *Embassy to Ava* Crawfurd had painted a most unflattering portrait of the ruler as a 'ludicrous' personage, 'inferior to his predecessor'.[47] Crawfurd had described the ruler as someone 'with too little firmness or strength of mind to think or act for himself, (and) is readily led' by others.[48] But here in his interview with Laird, Crawfurd was interested to know if the ruler was personally desirous of war with Britain:

> Q. On such occasions, did you ever hear an opinion expressed which led you to believe that the Court was desirous of a war with the English?
> A. Yes; I remember once circumstance which struck me very forcibly, and led me to form that opinion. When I was in Ava, for the second time, in 1823, I was present at an evening levee for the King. The late (General) Bandula, and several of his officers, who had just arrived from the conquest of Assam, were there. They had on their heads gold-wrought

46 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 39.
47 Crawfurd, 1829: 139, 140.
48 Crawfurd, 1829: 140.

> handkerchiefs, part of the plunder of Assam. The King took them off their heads and admired them. One of the Atwenwuns said to the King, "Your Majesty's dominions now extend to the Northern Sea. There was never so great a King as Your Majesty." [...] The King then ordered that a proper person should be appointed Shah-bandar for the collection of his revenues in Assam. Bandula now presented the King with two English dogs which had been taken, and proceeded to mention what number of prisoners he had brought, as well as hostages and presents from the native Prince whom he had left in authority. Bandula said, "I pursued the fugitives across the Burrampooter into the British territory; but, as the English are on terms of friendship with your Majesty, and you derive a large revenue from their trade to Rangoon, I (Bandula) retired. *But if your Majesty desires to have Bengal, I will conquer it for you, and will only require for this purpose the Kulas, or strangers, and not a single Burman." His Majesty smiled, but gave no reply. He was greatly pleased with what he heard during the evening,* and was fidgeting about in his seat every now and then, according to his custom when he is delighted with any thing. (*Emphasis mine*.)[49]

In the course of the long interview there are moments when it is hard to distinguish the difference, if any, between the perspectives of both men: Crawfurd and Laird had come to the same conclusions; namely that Burma was envious of British economic and military power, that the Burmese saw the British presence in Bengal as a threat, and that all Burmans – 'from the King to the beggar' in the street – 'had a contempt for the British'. Having framed the state of British-Burman relations thus, it is not surprising that Laird would only confirm what Crawfurd had suggested all along, namely that another war with Burma was inevitable:

> Q. Do you think this present peace will be lasting?
> A. *No, I do not. There is no confidence, no faith, to be placed in the Burmans, from the highest to the lowest rank.* If they suppose themselves to have the opportunity of regaining the provinces conquered from them, they will not fail to avail themselves to it. (*Emphasis mine*.)[50]

Laird's testimony and the data he provided would later furnish the raw material for Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*. Though he failed in his attempt to

49 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 39-40.
50 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 41.

secure Rangoon for the British (which would have deprived the Kingdom of Burma of access to the mouth of the Irrawaddy and thus cripple its external foreign trade), Crawfurd was adamant that the East India Company should remain on guard, and prepare for the 'collision' that was soon to follow. He pressed for the appointment of a British Resident at the court of Ava, to keep an eye on the king and his courtiers, and made it clear that the Resident's job would be to get as close as possible to the King and his inner circle of advisors in order to learn more about their future plans and how they proposed to rebuild their defeated kingdom and shattered economy.[51] Though hardly the stuff of James Bond novels, this was nonetheless the work of intel-gathering. But Crawfurd had no qualms whatsoever with what he did, for he was well aware of the fact that he was a loyal servant of a militarized company long accustomed to the art of espionage and conquest.

III.B. *Our Man from London*: The Merchant-turned-Informant Henry Gouger

> I am distinctly of opinion, that the war could not have been avoided.[52]
>
> Testimony of Henry Gouger,
> In Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*

John Laird was not the only British subject that Crawfurd interviewed in May 1826. Another source of information was the English commercial agent Henry Gouger, who Laird had claimed had aroused the suspicion of the Burmese for having brought to the court of Ava an alleged spy working for the Anglo-Indian government.[53]

Henry Gouger was a native of London, and had arrived in Rangoon in the year 1822. Apart from two short trips to Calcutta (of two months each, by his recollection) he had spent the rest of his time in Burma as a teak

51 In his interview with John Laird, Crawfurd had asked about how a British Resident stationed at the Court of Ava might get closer to the King of Burma: 'Q. By what line of demeanour, on the part of the British Resident, do you consider would prove most beneficial to the interest of his Government? A. The first matter necessary, is to get into the King and Queen's favour; then, to that of the Menzagi, the Queen's brother. The Resident should confine his visits to the members of the Royal family; but, by means of small presents, keep on good terms with the Woonghees, Attawuns, and Woondocks.' (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 42.)

52 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 73.

53 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 38-39.

merchant.[54] For two and a half years he was based in Ava, and at the outset of the war had been arrested and subsequently imprisoned for twenty months by the Burmese. Being stationed at the capital meant that he was aware of the goings-on in the lead-up to the First Anglo-Burmese War. He recounted in his testimony that he had 'seen troops levied and sent off in various directions', and noted that 'three armies marched from Ava during the time I have alluded to, viz. one under (General) Bandula, one under Saya Woonghee, and one under Moung-Kayo'.[55]

As in the case of his interview with Laird, Crawfurd was mostly interested in intelligence of a political-strategic and economic nature. He pressed Gouger for more information about the state of affairs at the Court of Ava, and enquired about Burmese preparations for war:

> Q. During your stay at the court, have you ever observed any disposition on the part of the officers of the Government to enter into war with the British?
> A. Yes; I have frequently heard such sentiments expressed by several officers under Government, particularly by the late Saya Woonghee.[56]

By then a recurrent theme emerges in the interviews that Crawfurd conducted with the former prisoners: Namely to build a consistent narrative of a Burmese court that was deluded about its military prowess and eager to engage with the British thanks to its own hubris and arrogance. Gouger's own testimony did not veer far from the script, and as in the case of Laird he also provided Crawfurd with a similar account of a Burmese government headstrong and bent on conflict:

> Q. What, according to your opinion, led to the late war between the British and Burman Governments?
> A. *In my opinion, it may be attributed primarily to a desire, on the part of the Burman Court, to try its strength with the British.* The counsels of (General) Bandula, on his return from the conquest of Assam to the capital, about the month of December, 1822, hastened the event, and I believe it chiefly owing to his advice that the war was so soon determined upon.

54 Gouger had been very successful in the Burmese teak trade, and claimed that he had exported about five thousand five hundred tons of teak from Burma to Calcutta and Java. By his own estimation he had earned for himself a hefty profit of about 274,000 rupees before the outbreak of the War. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 75.)

55 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 71.

56 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 72.

> Q. What opinion did the Burman Court entertain of the military character of the British nation and power in India previous to the war?
> A. *The Burmese had no idea either of our numbers or strength. When I mentioned the amount of our military force, they would never believe me. They, in fact, thought themselves the most courageous and cunning people in the world; they frequently talked of their skill in stratagem.* They ridiculed the idea of soldiers advancing to battle with the noise of drums and music, and exposing their whole bodies. (*Emphasis mine.*)[57]

In Gouger's testimony we can see a similar disdain for the Burmese who are presented as ignorant yet cocksure of their martial skills and contemptuous of their adversaries. The blame for the war was placed squarely on the shoulders of the Burmese, for it would have been unthinkable – to Gouger as it was to Crawfurd – that the East India Company could relent or make any concessions that would have been 'discreditable to its character':

> Q. Are you of opinion that the late war might have been avoided on the part of the British Government by negotiation?
> A. *I am distinctly of opinion, that the war could not have been avoided* on the part of the British Government, except by concessions discreditable to its character and injurious to its interests. (*Emphasis mine.*)[58]

But the interests that mattered here were those of the East India Company, and the Company was certainly not about to rein in its own ambitions across Bengal and Southeast Asia. Gouger did allude to the Burmese distrust of the British, and noted that 'they never believed our proposals could be sincere'[59] – and that was perhaps not surprising after all, for the East India Company had shown no forbearance as it expanded its sphere of influence across Bengal and into Northern India. Not once in the course of his own writing or in the interviews he conducted did Crawfurd put himself in the shoes of the Burmese, for whom the very presence of the East India Company so close to their borders posed the clearest existential threat to the kingdom of Burma. Instead we find repeated allusions to the dastardly character of the Burmans sprinkled all over his work, and the same bias was evident in the testimonies he collected, as when Gouger summarily dismisses all the Burmese as a 'faithless' race:

57 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 72.
58 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 73.
59 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 74.

> Q. Do you consider the character of the Burman Government to be faithless?
> A. *Very faithless indeed*: The Burmans pride themselves upon this character. (*Emphasis mine*.)[60]

Vilified from beginning to end as a cunning, venal and untrustworthy people, the Burmans were, for Crawfurd, a nation that could never be trusted. It was with that thought in mind that he proposed, yet again, that a British Resident be appointed to the Court of Ava – to learn more about what the Burmese were planning and what lay ahead as the Company's ambitions grew:

> Q. In what manner do you consider that the residence of a political agent will tend to this object (of peace with Burma)?
> A. In many ways. *The Burman Court is fickle and capricious, and easily acted upon by intrigues*. A British Agent, therefore, will have it in his power to counteract the bad effects of machinations and evil counsels; besides he will have it in his power to explain satisfactorily many little disputes and misapprehensions which may arise, and which may be followed by serious consequences, if not early adjusted.
> Q. Do you conceive that the presence of a British Agent at the Court of Ava will be useful towards the *protection of our commerce*?
> A. Yes; most certainly. Heretofore, British merchants residing at Rangoon have possessed no means of getting their grievances redressed, except by personally repairing to the Court, at an enormous loss of time and money. Over the Viceroys of Rangoon there was no control whatsoever, and they could proceed to acts of oppression which they would not dare to venture upon, were a British Agent residing at the Court, who could make known to their Government any acts of injustice committed on the persons or properties of British subjects. (*Emphasis mine*.)[61]

Trade and power went hand-in-hand for Crawfurd as it did for the other British merchants who were operating in Burma then. Though Crawfurd has been portrayed by some as an embodiment of the 'spirit of liberality' that animated the commercial enterprise of colonialism (Knapman, 2017[62]), the fact was that Burma's market could be opened up with the help of some

60 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 74.
61 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 74.
62 Knapman, 2017: 5

gunboats and cannons too. Crawfurd saw the need for a British Company presence at the very heart of the Burmese kingdom itself, and was keen to ensure that a Company-appointed Resident would be standing right beside the ruler of Burma to keep watch all the time. And this wasn't simply to ensure that the East India Company would be able to maintain its trade with and in Burma on the most favourable terms, but also to learn more about that other major trading power and market to the north – China – that had also been the prize for all the companies of Europe then cutting their way across Asia.

China was the greatest prize of all, and for decades the East India Company – along with all the other companies and governments of Western Europe – had tried to break into the Chinese market with the hope of tapping into the riches there. Crawfurd was eager to know more about Burma's relations with China and by the latter half of the interview with Couger seemed less interested in the war with Burma and more interested in the scope and volume of Burmese-Chinese trade. He plied Gouger with a host of questions: What was the nature of Burma's inland trade with China? What do the Chinese export, and what do they import to and from Burma? Who were the Chinese traders and emissaries? Did the Chinese have a presence in Burma, and did they hold sway at the court of Ava? What is the quality of Chinese silk sold in Burma, and what of the tea that they sell to the Burmese? And can this trade in tea and silk be expanded all the way to Britain?[63]

Gouger in turn was happy to provide Crawfurd with all that he wished to know: He noted that the Chinese were selling tea, silk, vermillion, gold, copper, quicksilver, spirits, hams and fruits to the Burmese, though they bought very little in comparison – Burma's main export to China being cotton at the time. He also noted that the Chinese silk that was being sold to Burma was of inferior quality, 'generally course, but the thread is round and even'; while the tea that they sold was of the black variety that might not go down too well back in England.[64] The overland trade route between Burma and China was passable, and there were regular caravans travelling back on forth, with most of the goods being transported by horses and mules.[65]

As in the case of the interview that he conducted with John Laird, Crawfurd was focused and direct. His aim was clear enough: firstly to press his argument for a British Resident to be stationed at the court of Ava so that the Company and the Anglo-Indian government would know first-hand what

63 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 75.
64 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 75.
65 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 76.

the Burmese were up to; secondly to estimate the strength of the Burmese military and economy; and thirdly to see how access to China could be gained via Burma. This was functional data-gathering: a sustained enquiry into the state of the kingdom with a view of consolidating the position of the East India Company in the face of its rivals. Raffles, in his *History of Java* (1817) had attempted to re-present himself as the colonizer-turned-scholar and curator of antiquities, but Crawfurd had neither the time nor the inclination to pass himself off as a cultured gentleman, fit to gain entry into London's salon society. It was power that he and his company wanted, and that power also came in the form of data and knowledge.

III.C. *The Unquiet American*: The Yankee Missionary Adoniram Judson

> All idea of negotiation is repugnant to the pride of the Burmans.[66]
>
> Testimony of Reverend Adoniram Judson,
> In Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*

From the beginning of the 19th century Americans had been trying to gain access to the ports and markets of Southeast Asia, and as more and more Americans ventured to the region they brought with them ideas, values and perspectives that were distinctly American as well. (Noor, 2018) It should be noted that the arrival of the Americans in Southeast Asia was not without its own set of complications: for starters, the region was already in the process of being carved up by the Western European powers, and the governments of Britain, France, Holland, Spain and Portugal were not exactly elated with the prospect of having to deal with another Western power encroaching on the territory they coveted. The British and Dutch were particularly suspicious of the Americans, and did not hesitate to gloat whenever American diplomats and merchants fumbled as they tried to negotiate with the local polities in the region. (Noor, 2018)

Crawfurd was likewise suspicious of the Americans and had warned of their activities and intentions in mainland and maritime Southeast Asia. That he eventually interviewed an American who had been held in captivity is interesting for earlier in his report to the Anglo-Indian government (1827) he had noted that American merchants were among those who were selling arms to the Burmese government:

66 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 55.

> In regards to fire-arms especially, the (Burmese) believe that little more is required than an ample supply of these to enable them to renew the war with every prospect of success. They are already making some feeble efforts to supply this want, by purchasing muskets wherever they can obtain them, giving at least double the prices at which the Americans have of late been able to supply to the Siamese. *There can be no doubt, but that, through the French and American trade,* they will soon be furnished to the full extent of their means of purchasing. (*Emphasis mine*.)[67]

The American Crawfurd interviewed was not a gun-runner but a man of the cloth instead: the Reverend Adoniram Judson, native of Massachusetts. Unlike the British merchants John Laird and Henry Gouger, Judson had arrived in Burma much earlier – in the year 1813 – and had spent most of his time learning the Burmese language and preaching the New Testament to the Burmese. He had resided in Ava for three years during his stay, and had grown acquainted with the King as well as other important members of the court. But notwithstanding his proximity and familiarity with the powers-that-be in the kingdom, he was among those who were apprehended and imprisoned at the outbreak of the First Anglo-Burmese War. He had spent 'twenty-one months a prisoner, out of which I was seventeen in irons' – first in Ava and later at Aongbenle.[68] Of the eight native Indian Sepoy officers who were imprisoned with him, only one survived while the others died of malnutrition.[69] Also by his account Judson was arrested and imprisoned for no other reason than the view of the Burmese that 'all white men are the subjects of the King of England':

> Q. Was there any distinction made between Americans and British subjects by the Court of Ava?
> A. Before the war commenced, it was fully explained to the Burmese Government, that the American Missionaries were not subjects of Great Britain; and under this impression, I thought it safe to visit the Court in 1824, although then of opinion that war was impending. The imprisonment of the American Missionaries, after the commencement of the war, now convinces me that they made no distinction. The Burmese, in fact, are of opinion, that all white men, except the French, are subjects of the King of England. Since the overthrow of the Emperor Napoleon, they even believe that France has become part of the King of England's dominions.

67 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix II, p. 17.
68 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 47.
69 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 62.

> The Americans are particularly liable to be confounded with the English, from speaking the same language.[70]

Judson did not indicate whether he was offended by the thought of being lumped together with the English – and in any case whatever republican virtues he may have held did not shine through in the course of the interview – but did elaborate at length about the state of Burma's defences and the preparations its army had made in the lead-up to the war. He spoke about Burmese troops being levied and armies gathered, and how General Bandula whom he had met while on the road to Pagan had taken command of an army that would later be sent to the Bengal border. In reply to Crawfurd's queries about the hawks that circled around King Bagyidaw, Judson noted that those who were most keen to engage with the English were Prince Mendagi of Sarawaddy, the Princess of Taongdwen – ' a person of great intelligence, and perfectly well acquainted with the feelings of the Court' – and the King's tutor Seah Woonghee.[71]

As in the interviews he conducted with Laird and Gouger, Crawfurd was keen to learn about the disposition of the Burmese court and what opinion they had of the British in neighbouring Bengal:

> Q. What, according to your opinion, led to the late war between the British and the Burman Governments?
> A. *A jealousy of the British power on the part of the Burmans, confidence in their own prowess on account of the recent conquests of Cassay and Assam, and a desire to expand their territory.* (*Emphasis mine.*)[72]

Yet again Crawfurd had collected another testimony from a Westerner (albeit an American, but that could not be helped) that confirmed his view that the First Anglo-Burmese War was caused by Burmese ambition alone.[73] Judson's testimony, like that of Laird and Gouger, confirmed Crawfurd's own view that the Burmese were a malevolent race of people who could

70 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 48.

71 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 49.

72 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 49.

73 Judson recounted his meeting with the Prince of Sarawaddy who said to him: "The English are the inhabitants of a small and remote island. What business do they have to come in ships from so great a distance to dethrone kings, and take possession of countries they have no right to? They contrive to conquer and govern the black strangers with caste (Hindus) who have puny frames and no courage. They have never yet fought with so strong and brave a people as the Burmans, skilled in the use of sword and spear." (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 49.)

not live in peace with the British – while omitting the fact that Britain's expansion across Bengal and North India was far greater than Burma's expansion at the time.

Burma's fear of the British East India Company and its growing influence in and beyond Bengal was something that Crawfurd barely entertained, and that was particularly clear throughout the narrative of his *Embassy to Ava*. Never the one to try the shoe on the other foot, Crawfurd's work and the reports he wrote were consistently monological in perspective. Yet Judson did allude to the fear and apprehension of the Burmese when he was asked about how they felt about British power being an obstacle to their own ambitions:

> Q. Have you ever heard that the Burman Government has felt displeasure at the British power being an obstacle to the extension of its territories to the Westward?
> A. When I was at Court, for the first time, in 1819, the year of his present Majesty's (King Bagyidaw) accession to the throne, the late Mr. Gibson, who afterwards went on a mission to Cochin-China, was engaged by the King's orders in constructing a map of the Burman dominions, together with the adjacent countries of Hindostan, Siam, and Cochin-China: Mr. Gibson had exhibited this map to the King, and came to me from the palace, mentioning what had taken place. The King, on seeing the map, used the following expression: "You have assigned the English too much territory." Mr. Gibson said the map gave a correct representation of the British dominions. The King answered, with evident feelings of dissatisfaction: "The territory of the strangers is unreasonably large." This was before the conquest of Assam, and it was observed that this country would be a desirable acquisition to the Burmans.[74]

Crawfurd, however, was less concerned about the anxiety of the Burman court and more interested in what the Burmese thought of British power. He probed Judson on this point several times, and the missionary noted that the Burmese had initially felt that the war with Britain would be a walk-over for them. The Burmese ruler and his courtiers could not comprehend how Indians could consent to serve the British colonial army, and regarded the 'black kulas' as nothing more than slaves of the English.[75] For the English officers and soldiers the Burmese had considerable contempt as well, as he noted:

74 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 51-52.
75 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 52-53.

> Q. What opinion did the Burmese, previous to the war, entertain of the European troops of the British army?
> A. They had a better opinion of them than of the Hindus; but considered them luxurious and effeminate, incapable of standing the fatigues of war, and therefore unable to contend with a people hardy like themselves, who could carry on war with little food and no shelter.[76]

But what Crawfurd seemed to be aiming at was a verdict upon the Burmese as a belligerent nation that could never be trusted, and this was precisely what Judson eventually provided him – as Laird and Gouger had done – in the course of their interview:

> Q. What, in your opinion, prevented the Burmans from negotiating during the war?
> A. *All idea of negotiation is repugnant to the pride of the Burmans, and contrary to their custom*. They believe the conquering party will always keep what it has got, if it can; and that negotiation is therefore useless. *Overtures to treat are always looked upon as a mark of weakness, or they are considered as artifice to gain time*. (*Emphasis mine.*)[77]

Here Crawfurd found himself back in familiar territory and his favourite topic: the deceitful and capricious character of the Burman race whom he so distrusted. Following a train of leading questions that led his interviewee to the conclusion he desired, Judson would add yet another nail to the coffin of Burma's reputation as he responded to Crawfurd's following query:

> Q. Do you consider the Burman Government very faithless?
> A. *Utterly so. They have no idea either of the moral excellence or the utility of good faith. They would consider it nothing less than folly to keep a treaty if they could gain any thing by breaking it*. The fidelity hitherto observed by the British Government in fulfilling the stipulations of the late treaty, stupified the Burmans. They knew not what to make of it. (*Emphasis mine.*)[78]

Having done and dusted Burma, Crawfurd turned his attention to the subject of Burma's relations with other Asian states next. Judson was asked about Burma's relations with the independent kingdoms of India, and whether

76 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 53.
77 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 55.
78 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 56.

there had been any intrigues between the ruler of Burma and the Princes of Hindustan. The American missionary noted that some of the Burmese nobles – such as General Bandula – had established contact with some Indian princes, and that there was at least one attempt by the Rajah of the Sikh kingdom to forge an alliance with the ruler of Burma.[79] But as always it was China that was the apple of Crawfurd's eye, and it was Burma's relations with China that interested him the most.

Crawfurd wished to learn more about Burma's relations with both China and Cochinchina, and Judson provided him with whatever information he had:

> Q. Do you know any thing of the object of the late Burman mission to Cochin China?
> A. I have understood that the object of it was an alliance, offensive and defensive, by which the two powers were to attack the Siamese, from the East and the West, conquer the country, and partition it between them.
> Q. Do you know of any political connexion between the Burmese and the Chinese Governments?
> A. An Embassy arrived in Ava in 1823, which I have understood to be from the Emperor of China. A white elephant and a princess were demanded in strong language, which occasioned some alarm to the Burmese Court, under an impression that the Chinese wanted to quarrel with them. The white elephant and the princess, there being none to spare, were refused, and a number of common elephants and other presents were sent.
> Q. Have you ever heard that the Burmese claimed the assistance of the Chinese in their war with the English?
> A. I never heard any mention of such a thing in Ava.[80]

79 In his testimony Judson did note that several attempts had been made by some Indians – notably Sikhs – to make contact with the court of Ava: 'I heard on three or four occasions, that the late (General) Bandula boasted that he maintained a secret correspondence with several native Princes of Hindostan, who, according to him, would rise against the British, as soon as the Burmans would set them a good example. Reports of such insurrections were frequently propagated and received with avidity by the Burman Court. There arrived in Ava, I think in 1823, eight or ten Seiks (Sikhs), purporting to be a mission from the Rajah of their country. They stated, that they had suffered shipwreck in crossing a river, and lost the letter and presents which they had from their master for the King of Ava. I understood that the object of their mission was a treaty, offensive and defensive, to drive the British out of India. For a long time they were honourably received, but during the war they became suspected, and were for a short time imprisoned. They were finally sent back with letters, and a sum of money given to each individual. I heard officers of Government state, that the alliance would have been desirable, particularly as the King of the Seiks had never been subdued by the English'. (Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 56-57.)

80 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 57.

Crawfurd had failed in his attempt to secure a treaty with the ruler of Cochinchina, and by then attitudes in that kingdom towards all Europeans had hardened – Emperor Minh Mạng of the Nguyen dynasty outlawed the teaching of Christianity in 1825. But Crawfurd must have been relieved to learn that the Chinese had not offered to come to the aid of the Burmese during the recent war, and that relations between the Chinese and Cochinchinese were not so good as to pose a threat to Britain's own ambitions in the region. That the Burmese had run out of white elephants to send as tribute to potential allies was good news too – though a chromolithograph of a royal white elephant would grace the frontispiece of Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava* – and the shortage of sacred elephants was indicative of the state of the Burmese economy then, which already owed ten million (one crore) Rupees to the Anglo-Indian government. The testimonies of Judson, Laird and Gouger reinforced Crawfurd's own view and argument that Burma was a boastful yet feeble state that was on the defensive, and which could not be trusted to abide by the terms of the Treaty of Yandabo. All that was needed now were a few more voices to add some colour to the chorus of disapproval he had orchestrated.

III.D. Everything including the Kitchen Sink: The Testimonies of Jeronimo de Cruz, John Barretto and the mysterious Mr. ******* from ******

> They (the Burmese) all thought they could beat the English, and often talked of invading Bengal.
>
> Testimony of John Barretto,
> In Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava*

Crawfurd's interviews were not limited to the English and American prisoners he met in Rangoon. To bolster his case, he also met and interviewed some other Europeans and British subjects who had been imprisoned by the Burmese during the war. Among them was the Portuguese mariner-turned-translator Jeronimo de Cruz, who was born in Rangoon and who had previously served as quartermaster aboard a British merchant vessel. De Cruz was in some ways a polyglot: He spoke Burmese but also several other languages including English, Siamese, Hindustani and Malay.[81] After a career at sea he found himself based in Rangoon and eventually worked as a linguist and translator to a number of Burmese officials, including the

81 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 63.

Prince of Sarawaddy. In his testimony to Crawfurd he stated that he knew the prince personally, as well as King Bagyidaw's half-brother and the late General Bandula.

John Barretto was another interesting personality, being of mixed Dutch-Siamese ancestry (his father was a Dutch surgeon who worked in Siam before he and his family were captured by the Burmese). For 'eight or nine years' he had been sent off to study at Madras, where he picked up the English language, and after that he worked at the Madras Custom House for three years before his return to Burma.[82] He had travelled to India and the Malay Peninsula several times, and recorded his visits to Madras, Bengal and Penang. Upon his return to Burma he worked as a commercial agent for an English merchant, conveying goods for export from Ava. Like de Cruz, he knew the Prince of Sarawaddy (who seemed to know everyone who was anyone in Burma back then), and was a witness to the war before he was himself apprehended and imprisoned by the Burmese authorities.

Perhaps the most intriguing, and certainly mysterious, among the non-Europeans whom Crawfurd interviewed was the hugger-mugger Mr. ******* who was a native of ******. Crawfurd noted in his work that the identity of the mysterious Mr. ******* was kept secret as the man was still living in Ava, and was thus residing under Burmese rule. ******* stated that he was a merchant, and that he had brought to Burma English and Indian cloths that were worth a total of forty thousand Rupees.[83] Little can be gleaned about the man, though he did state in the course of the interview that he was fair-skinned, a British subject and that Persian was his native tongue.[84] Though not a European himself, he was treated with suspicion on account of being a subject of King George IV, and was locked up along with 'five Persians, a Turk, a Jew of Constantinople and four natives of Hindustan'.[85] Like the British merchants John Laird and Henry Gouger, *******'s property was also 'plundered by the officers of Government and subsequently lost'.[86]

By now the reader should not be surprised by the line of questioning that Crawfurd would take. As in the other interviews he conducted, his primary concern was the state of Burma's defences and the attitude of the

82 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 68.
83 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 65.
84 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 66, 68.
85 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 68.
86 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 68.

Burman court towards the British in Bengal. Jeronimo de Cruz related his account of the discussions at the court of Ava then, and how he was unwittingly dragged into the discussion after his employer – a certain Mr. Lanciego – was commanded by General Bandula to provide the Burmese navy with twenty ships:

> Q. Did you ever hear any of the principal officers of the Burman Government express their sentiments respecting a war with the British before its commencement?
> A. After the conquest of Assam, I heard (General) Bandula say to his Majesty, "I will also make over Bengal into your hands." The King asked Mr. Lanciego's opinion on the subject. I was then in that gentleman's employment. Mr. Lanciego replied, "The conquest of Bengal is not practicable: the English are very powerful." To which the King said, "You know nothing about it; are you afraid of losing the duties of the port of Rangoon: Although the English do not come to trade, the French, the Chinese, the Telingas, the Parsees, and other people, will come." Upon another occasion, at the house of Bandula, this officer, speaking to Mr. Lanciego respecting a war with the English, said, "You must go and prepare twenty ships at Rangoon for an expedition against Calcutta. I will attack Bengal from the side of Chittagong." Mr. Lanciego answered, "How am I to build twenty ships; it takes a year to build one."[87]

De Cruz confirmed that General Bandula had been ordered by King Bagyidaw 'to march upon Chittagong to take that place, and then proceed for the capture of Calcutta'.[88] John Barretto concurred with this view, and repeated the claim that the Burmese were intent on invading Bengal to oust the British once and for all:

> Q. Do you know what opinion the Burmans in general entertained of the British power in India before the war?
> A. They all thought they could beat the English, and often talked of invading Bengal, chiefly on account of the plunder they would get.[89]

87 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 63.

88 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 64. Mr. *******'s testimony also recounted a similar story, of how King Bagyidaw had commanded General Bandula to first move against Chittagong and then proceed to engage the British in Bengal. (Ibid, p. 66.)

89 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 70.

Mr. ******* also agreed that the Burmese had intended to take the war all the way to Bengal, and that it was none other than King Bagyidaw himself who had ordered General Bandula to push the offensive way beyond the borders of Burma proper;

> Q. Do you know any particulars concerning the late war between the Burmans and the English?
> A. Yes; I have heard as follows. There was a desert island between Arracan and Chittagong: The English built a house upon it: the Burmans drove them away, killing one or two persons. The Governor-General wrote a letter to the King of Ava, complaining of the aggression, charging the Governor of Arracan of misconduct, and requesting he might be removed. The King was highly indignant of this letter. He gave orders to Bandula to proceed to the Chittagong frontier, saying, "That a number of his slaves had run away into the British dominions; that he, Bandula, must demand them, *and that if he did not find them at Chittagong, he must proceed to Calcutta with his army, and take them by force*." (*Emphasis mine*.)[90]

But as the tide of war turned against them, panic began to set at the court of Ava. By the time that British forces had captured Rangoon, King Bagyidaw was anxious about the fate of his kingdom and himself: 'He was in the predicament of a man who had got hold of a tiger by the tail, which it was neither safe to hold nor let go'.[91]

Barretto, De Cruz and ******* all concurred with the view that General Bandula's ultimate objective had been Bengal, and that the Burmese general was convinced that his forces would be able to expel the British from the region for good.[92] ******* also related the story of how the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh of Lahore had approached the Burmese and suggested a two-pronged attack on British Bengal from the West and the East – though he added that this was likely a rumour and that the Indians who had approached the court of Ava were possibly impostors out to make a quick buck.[93]

Crawfurd questioned the men further about Burmese perceptions of the East India Company's army, and how the Burmese rated the British

90 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 66.
91 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 65.
92 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 63, 66, 69, 70.
93 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 67.

troops in general: Barretto recounted the words of the Prince of Sarawaddy, who said to him 'The Burmans and English formerly thought nothing of each other; now the English have shown their pride, and the Burmans will not play with them hereafter'.[94] ******* likewise concurred and noted that 'the Burmans thought that all the world ought to be the slaves of the King of Ava, and that it was presumption to contend with his armies'.[95] Though initially confident, the defeat of the Burmese armies and the capture of Rangoon caught the government of Burma with thunderclap surprise. As the fortunes of war shifted, the interviewees noted that it became harder and harder for the Burmese generals to recruit troops to add to their ranks. At the start of the war a Burmese soldier could be got for five *ticals*, but as ******* noted, when it became clear that Burma was about to be defeated the Burmese troops 'were much terrified, and could not be brought to fight. A soldier then could not be got for one hundred and fifty *ticals*'.[96] Of the army of the East India Company itself, all three interviewees agreed that the Burmans had more dread and awe of the European troops of the Company's army, while they regarded the Indian Sepoys as less aggressive, but also nicer and kinder to the Burmese people.[97]

Crawfurd was keen to know how the Burmese felt about the British occupation, and whether the British would be supported if they remained in Burma. It was de Cruz who opined that a British presence in Burma would be welcomed by the common folk, for they were seen as fair:

> Q. Do you know what opinion the lower orders of Burmans and Talains entertain of the English Government?
> A. *They would be pleased if the English were to stay in Rangoon.*
> Q. Why would they be pleased?
> A. Because the English had acted fairly towards them, committed no acts of extortion, and they can trust what they say. (*Emphasis mine.*)[98]

94 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 70.

95 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 67.

96 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 64-65. Mr. ******* later added that as the war drew to a close the King of Burma attempted a hasty reform of the recruitment system: 'The King heard that the English paid their troops monthly, and considered that this was the reason why they fought so well. Latterly a bounty of one hundred and fifty ticals was given, but few troops obtained. The soldiers purchased fine cloths, ate opium and ganja, but at the first sight of the European troops ran off'. (Ibid, p. 68)

97 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, pp. 65, 67, 68, 70.

98 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 65.

De Cruz's testimony may have influenced Crawfurd's own view that the British should have retained control over Rangoon – which would have robbed Burma of its most important port and access to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean – and as we have seen earlier in his report to the Anglo-Indian government this was one of his major complaints about the settlement that was reached after the Treaty of Yandabo. Though he failed to persuade his superiors on the subject of Rangoon, Crawfurd was now in possession of valuable data: In the testimonies of de Cruz, Barretto and *******, along with those of Laird, Gouger and Judson, he had collected enough information about the state of Burma so as to write a detailed report about the state of the kingdom's economy and its military capabilities. But in the course of these interviews it can be seen that the character of the Burmese people had been framed and fixed as well: portrayed as weak and feeble, yet arrogant and aggressive, the Burmans in particular had been singled out as a race that was unredeemable. This negative view of the Burmese in general and the Burmans in particular as the disabled Other would be repeated again and again in his account of the *Embassy of Ava* that he wrote later, after the interviews had been completed and compiled.[99] But it seemed that Crawfurd had already made up his mind about the utter worthlessness of the Burmese even before he began writing the *Embassy to Ava*, thanks in part to the testimonies he had collected earlier in May 1826: The damning judgement of ******* sums up how Crawfurd and the other Europeans he met saw the Burmans in general:

> Q. What is your opinion of the Burmans as a people?
> A. *They are stupid and uncivilized: among the courtiers there is not to be found one man of common understanding.* (*Emphasis mine.*)[100]

But a common understanding was found and reached between Crawfurd and his interviewees; and that was the idea of Burma as a land in stasis, kept backward by a tyrant who lorded over an uncivilized race. The stage was set for a future 'war of liberation', where eventually Burma would again be defeated, not twice but thrice, and ultimately brought under British colonial rule. But the colony that would be built in the wake of the First, Second and Third Anglo-Burmese Wars would be one where *race* was a decisive factor in colonial governance, and where Burman identity could only be understood in reductive, essentialized terms.

99 Crawfurd, 1829: 96, 97, 105, 145, 147, 244-246, 255, 263.
100 Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix X, p. 68.

IV. Racial Difference and the Framing of the Burmese in the Writing of John Crawfurd

> More than rubber and tin, the legacy of colonialism was racial ideology.[101]
>
> Charles Hirshmann,
> *The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya*

There are echo chambers, and there are echo chambers. And though some echo chambers may be the result of chance, there can also be echo chambers that are carefully designed and crafted to serve particular ends.

The echo chamber we see in Appendix X of Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava* is one that was in many ways sophisticated and virtually airtight. While Raffles had curated his information into a history of Java, Crawfurd had pruned his data, tending to the garden of his knowledge in a manner that would lead him and his readers to the conclusion he desired. The manner in which the main body of his narrative (*The Embassy to Ava*) connects with the report that he submitted to the Anglo-Indian government and the evidence that he had marshalled to bolster his case against a 'belligerent' Burma is seamless. In the interviews he personally conducted, Crawfurd's line of questioning was precise; and there was no ambiguity in his findings, no Major McFluffers among his witnesses, nothing that would have left his readers uncertain. Nothing was left to chance, as Crawfurd painted the vast and complex portrait of Burma as the torpid land of Asiatic despotism. The manner in which he conducted his interviews was exacting – starting from the premise that the only testimonies that counted were those of Westerners and British subjects – and led him to the inevitable conclusion that Burma was a land that could only be checked by an external power. Diverse though his interviewees were, their accounts were deployed in so deliberate a manner that they could only concur with Crawfurd's own views, leading to the same observations and conclusions.

By the time Crawfurd's *Embassy to Ava* was published in 1829 Burma was already slipping down the slope of slow decline: In the same year King Bagyidaw created the Burmese Royal Historical Commission (on 11 May 1829) with the task of writing yet another official history of the Konbaung dynasty, trying to gloss over the Burma's defeat at the First Anglo-Burmese War three

101 Charles Hirshman, *'The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology'*, in Sociological Forum (SF), Cornell University Press. Vol. 1. no.2. 1986: 357.

years earlier. Britain and its empire had also undergone changes, some of which were unprecedented: The Catholics of the United Kingdom had gained some reprieve thanks to the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, while thousands of miles away in British India Governor-General Lord William Bentinck had declared that whoever aided and abetted the act of *suttee* would be found guilty of culpable homicide. Robert Peel would establish the Metropolitan Police Force in London, armed with the power to police the population of the city – though Stamford Raffles had attempted something far grander for the island of Java way back in 1814. Londoners were enthralled by George Shillibeer's city-wide bus service that began operating on 4 July, offering them more mobility than ever before; while Britain's colonial subjects across Asia were being epistemologically arrested as their identities were fixed according to essentialized notions of native identity.

As I have tried to show above, the connection between the interviews that Crawfurd did in May 1826 and his book that was published later in 1829 are clear. There are several themes that recur again and again in the testimonies he collected, the report that he wrote (on 22 of February 1827) and the book that he later published. The most obvious among these was the notion that the Burmese were a weak yet warlike nation whose ambitions were beyond taming.

The second theme that occupied Crawfurd's interest was the state of the Burmese kingdom and its economy; and in the testimonies he collected, the report that he wrote and the book he later published he repeatedly alluded to the weakness of the Burmese state at the time. As we have seen in the case of the interviews he conducted, Crawfurd was keen to know just how strong or weak the Burmese economy really was, and whether it would be able to sustain itself in the future. It was with that thought in mind that he pursued his enquiry into Burma's external economic relations, in particular with China but also India and Cochinchina. His queries about Burma's relations with China hark back to an older concern of the East India Company that he served, namely whether a foreign power could eventually gain direct access to the market of China by occupying the states adjacent to it.

But perhaps the most obvious – and lasting – impression that we get from reading Crawfurd's interviews, report and book is his stereotypical view of the Burmese people in general and the Burmans in particular. Not known for harboring much love for Southeast Asians in general, Crawfurd's portrayal of the Siamese and Cochinchinese (1830) as well as Malays, Javanese, Bugis, Ambonese, etc. (1820) was hardly flattering. But in his representation of the Burmans in particular Crawfurd seems to have unleashed his pen with literary abandon. His characterization of

the Burmans – from the King of Ava to his courtiers to the peasants in the streets – was disparaging, laced with the most toxic venom to have dripped upon his pages. Crawfurd had reduced and simplified the Burmans to a homogenous race, and a decidedly inferior race to boot. And the idea that the Burmans were an inferior, untrustworthy race would eventually be the cornerstone of British colonial policy and colonial race relations in Burma in the decades to come.

No respite was given to the Kingdom of Burma, and this was partly due to the ever-growing competition between the European powers as they scrambled to gain further influence across all of Southeast Asia: In June 1846 the Dutch attacked Northern Bali with a force of frigates and steamboats, and the Balinese were defeated and the royal palace at Singaraja was captured and later destroyed. British merchants and adventurers were likewise on the lookout for new, untapped opportunities and in 1847 Henry Wise, formerly of the East India Company, formed the East Archipelago Company, after gaining the right to mine coal on the island of Labuan from the Brooke government in Sarawak. Burma was put on the defensive again as a result of the Burmese-Siamese War that began in 1849, after Siam's King Rama III ordered an attack on Burmese territory which Siam claimed for itself. Though Burma was able to mount a defence against the Siamese, their hands were already full by then, having to keep both the British and Chinese at bay at the same time.[102]

In 1852 Burma – while still at war with Siam – would be invaded by the British once more, as a result of the Burmese not willing to give in to all the demands made by the British in the Treaty of Yandabo. The Second Anglo-Burmese War commenced on 5 April 1852 – when the forces of the East India Company attacked and captured the port of Martaban – and by the end of the war on 20 January 1853 Burma had suffered an even greater defeat: Rangoon, Bassein and Pegu were captured, the Burmese fleet (along with King Pagan Min's ship) was captured, and the Shwedagon and Shwemawdaw pagodas looted by British troops. King Pagan Min (1811-1880; r. 1846-1852) was eventually forced off the throne and replaced by his brother Mindon Min (1808-1878; r. 1853-1878).

Then, as before, the East India Company had relied upon its Sepoy troops from India who made up a substantial portion of the Company's army. Though Crawfurd had long since retired from his services in the East Indies, his negative view of Asians as being racially inferior to Europeans never

102 Following King Rama III's death in 1851 the Siamese would begin to relent, and the Burmese-Siamese War would be over by 1855.

changed (Siew 2019) and his legacy lived on[103]: The framing of the Burmans as an impuissant and feckless people was further reinforced as a result of this second clash of arms, while the Company regarded its Indian mercenary troops as vigorous and warlike.

By that time the Burmese were also seen as a people 'racially unfit' for war as well as governance. As Britain's power in Burma grew – following the capture of Rangoon and the control of the Irrawaddy delta, Burmese power retreated inland and northwards to Mandalay. King Thibaw Min (1859-1916; r. 1878-1885) attempted to galvanize his kingdom's economy by establishing diplomatic contact with other Western nations such as France, but to no avail. It was only a matter of time before Britain would pounce on the last bastion of native power in Burma, and that came during the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Third Anglo Burmese War began on 7 November 1885, and British troops were ferried upriver along the Irrawaddy by steamships owned by the British Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. The fighting was brutal but short, and by 29 November 1885 King Thibaw's forces were vanquished for good. By then the Burman people had been reduced to the stuff of caricatures and tabloid jokes, and in the Western press there were reports of all kinds of arcane bloodthirsty rituals allegedly performed at the court of Mandalay.[104] After his defeat and capture King Thibaw himself would be depicted in a cartoon in *Punch* magazine as 'Theebaw the Burmese Toad', portrayed as a comical ruler with toad-like features, being kicked in the rear by a British soldier. The last ruler of the Burmese Konbaung dynasty would be forced to leave his palace along with his family and entourage, after which the contents of the Mandalay palace were looted and auctioned off by the colonial army's Mandalay Prize Committee.

On 1 January 1886 the whole of Burma was annexed by the British Indian Empire and henceforth administered by the Indian Civil Service (ICS). From the beginning Burma was divided between the upland mountain regions and the plains below, that were regarded as 'Burma proper'. As a result of this division British colonial power and authority were concentrated on the governance of the Irrawaddy delta area and the management of the Burman ethic group in particular, while less attention was paid to the governance and development of the minority groups in the colony. Burma was seen and administered as a patchwork of ethnic-racial zones, each with its own essential characteristics; and this was the basis of colonial race-relations in Burma and the 'plural economy' that would be developed in the years to come. Crucial to the success of this imperial enterprise was the need to

103 Siew, 2019: 222-227.

104 See: 'Buried, not Burned' in *Lowell Daily Courrier*, Massachusetts, 19 March 1875: 3.

police the new colony, which meant keeping an eye on all the ethnic groups of Burma while also keeping them apart.[105]

By then the discursive framing of the effete and conniving Burman had stuck, and British policy towards the Burmese was marked by the level of distrust that they had for the Burmans especially. The introduction of Indian troops to Burma – following the First, Second and Third Anglo-Burmese Wars – would be a case in point. Britain's security force in Burma (as in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States) was an Anglo-Indian one that was bi-coloured: with white British officers leading Indian colonial troops. Britain's imperial army was then also an *Indian* army (Heathcote, 1974; Singh, 1976), though the juxtaposing of different Asian peoples in a situation so antagonistic and irreconcilable could only lead to further instability and eventual resistance (Ma Mya Sein, 1973; Callahan, 2005; Sinclair, 2006).

That the Burmans – and other native communities of Burma – were being alienated from the praxis of policing and governance in the colony did not seem to bother the colonial authorities then, for they had already been typecast as an unreliable people anyway. Crawfurd had left Burma for the more temperate climes of England, but his discursive construct of the deceitful and irresponsible Burman lived on.

V. Deadly Testimonies: Weaponised Knowledge in the Workings of Racialized Colonial-Capitalism

> Colonial domination, because it is total and tends to over-simplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultured life of a conquered people [...] Nothing has been left to chance, to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness.

105 Prior to the complete conquest of Burma the British had already attempted to co-opt some of the native leaders in the same way that Raffles had tried to do in Java in 1814. As Hingkanonta notes: 'The principal aims of the 1880 Regulation Act were to provide both the *kyedangyis* and *gaungs* with defined legal powers and to establish for them a fixed rate of remuneration, to be paid for from central and local government funds [...] The new legislation described precisely what duties village headmen (note that the term '*thugyi*' would be replaced by 'village headman'), *kyedangyis* and *gaungs* were expected to perform under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner, Sub-divisional Magistrate, and other officers. Indeed, the *gaungs* would now be appointed as 'a supervisor of village headmen and were always, though improperly, looked upon as more exclusively a police official than the *kyedangyi*.' (Hingkanonta, 2013: 117)

Frantz Fanon,
The Wretched of the Earth

> Global colonialism [...] projected a cultural hierarchy of astonishing force and pervasive influence. European cultural primacy was asserted more aggressively in this period than before or since. European categories of thought, forms of scientific enquiry, interpretations of the past, ideas of social order, models of public morality, concepts of crime and justice, and modes of literary expression, as well as European recipes for health, notions of leisure and even styles of dress, became the civilised 'standard' against which other cultures were measured and often found wanting.[106]

John Darwin,
After Tamerlane

John Crawfurd would outlive his contemporary Stamford Raffles by several decades, though he would not find himself lionised as one of the great builders of Empire in the final years of his life. There would be no statues or memorials of him, and there would be no hagiographies written in his honour. Crawfurd would be remembered chiefly for the works that he wrote while he was stationed in Southeast Asia by the Company. He would continue to write even after his return to London, and his interest in Southeast Asia and China did not wane: Along with Hugh Murray, Thomas Lynn, William Wallace and Gilber Burnet he would be one of the co-authors of a substantial three-volume work entitled *A Historical and Descriptive Account of China* that would be published in 1843[107]; while sending off the occasional letter from the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall, London.[108] Convinced as he was by the theory of polygenesis and the idea that Asians and Europeans were in fact separate 'races', Crawfurd's would 'reject Darwin's idea of evolution as a fallacy and castigate *The Origin of Species* as little more than a 'collection

106 Darwin, 2008: 339.

107 Crawfurd, John; Hugh Murray, Thomas Lynn, William Wallace and Gilber Burnet (authors), *A Historical and Descriptive Account of China*, Vols. I-III, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1843.

108 See: Letter by John Crawfurd, addressed to a certain Dr. Grey. 16 February 1865. Short letter where Crawfurd is asking Grey's opinion on a document/paper he has enclosed with the letter. The letter bears the blind stamp of the Athenaeum Club on Pall Mall in London. (Author's collection.)

of facts'.[109] (Though Knapman (2017) has also pointed out that Crawfurd's opposition to evolutionary theory was 'misguided and demonstrated a total lack of comprehension' of the theory.[110]) Close to the end of his life he reiterated his belief in racial difference and racial hierarchies in his paper *On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races of Man* (1867) where he insisted that Asians could never develop to be as advanced and civilised as Westerners, and where even Asian art and music was derided by him as 'miserable' and inferior.[111] (Siew, 2019)

The fate of the kingdom of Burma that he wrote about – which some had seen as a possible entry-point into the inland market of China – would wax and wane according to the realities of imperial geopolitics. Notwithstanding Britain's aim of finding an overland access route into interior China via Burma (which was also an obsession among the French, who sought an inland route into China via the Mekong River in Indochina), Britain would finally gain access to the Chinese market via direct negotiation with the Qing Emperor and the Chinese government. Britain's economic activity in China proved detrimental in many ways, not least thanks to the sale of opium to the Chinese that was resented by the Chinese government, and this would eventually lead to the First Opium War of 1839-1842. The Second Opium War of 1856-1860 would lead to further losses for China, and force the Chinese government to accept diplomats from Britain, France and Russia at the court in Beijing. At the end of the war both the Yiheyuan Summer Palace and the Yuanmingyuan Summer Palace were looted by Western troops, and later destroyed at the orders of Lord Elgin. Thanks to Britain's victories in China, interest in a Burmese-China overland trade route would wane by the end of the 19th century, and British Burma would be integrated into the territory of the Anglo-Indian Empire instead.

Burma's absorption into the Anglo-Indian Empire would cut it off from the developments of the rest of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia, and in turn open the way for the mass influx of migrants – workers, merchants, tax farmers, convicts and soldiers – from India instead. In due course Burmese society would be divided along vertical cleavages of racial-ethnic difference as well as horizontal cleavages of class and power, with the British and European colonial-commercial elite at the top. All of this was accomplished with the tools of colonial knowledge and power: the map and the racial census. (Anderson, 1983; Hirshman, 1986; Cohn, 1996) But the raw data that

109 Knapman, 2017: 233.
110 Knapman, 2017: 228.
111 Siew, 2019: 224-225, 226.

fed the machinery of colonial knowledge-production was gathered decades earlier, at the very beginning of Burma's contact with Britain, by the likes of Crawfurd the Company-man.

Like Raffles who had claimed to know all there was to know about Java, Crawfurd had also claimed to know Burma and the Burmans; but his was a form of knowing that both constructed and framed the object of his knowledge – a kind of *knowledge that kills*, to borrow the phrase coined by Todorov.[112] That Crawfurd could only see the Burmans, and Burmese by extension, in such depreciating terms was hardly surprising, for there was a lack of clarity in his use of the terms 'savage' and 'barbarian' then.[113] And the final, arresting image we have of the Burmans in Crawfurd's work is one that was literally grotesque. As I have noted elsewhere (Noor, 2016.a), Crawfurd's account of his mission to Ava departed in slant and focus from his previous works on Southeast Asia, and his *Embassy to Ava* included references and vignettes that had hitherto never been among his range of concerns. The images that were inserted into Crawfurd's book included figure studies that were more exotic. Between pages 184 and 185 is a close-up portrait of a blue-faced woman of the Kayan tribe and to her left is a *Profile of a Man Covered with Hair*. Crawfurd had chanced upon the famous 'hairy family of Burma' (Shwe-Maong and his daughter Maphoon) who would later amaze and repulse London society.[114] When we place these images in the wider context of his work as a whole – that had depicted Burma as 'savage' and 'tranquil without animation', they reinforce the framing of the Burmans as being so alien and different from Europeans, which was in keeping with Crawfurd's polygenetic leanings at the time.

In coming to know Burma and the Burmans. Crawfurd had framed the latter according to his own worldview that was shaped by his belief in the existence of separate races. Long before the kingdom of Burma had the stuffing knocked out of it and the Burmans were sidelined as an undependable race, it was the likes of John Crawfurd who delivered the first epistemic blow, thanks to the deadly testimonies he had collected. In the gathering

112 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*. New York: Harper and Row. 1984: 185.

113 Knapman, 2017: 210.

114 Members of the famous 'hairy family' of Burma would later be brought to Europe and presented as freaks of nature. After the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885 the family was forced to flee from the palace at Mandalay. Maphoon and Maung-Phoset were later rescued by the Italian entrepreneur Captain Paperno and they would be taken on tour across Europe. [Jan Bondeson, *Freaks: The Pig-Faced Lady of Manchester Square and Other Scientific Marvels*. Cornell University Press, 2006. pp. 29-35.]

of these testimonies Crawfurd had hardly bothered to speak to the natives themselves, for the natives had already been reduced to objects of knowledge. And it is the lamentable fate of all objects that they can only be the mute witnesses to their own history.

3. Fairy Tales and Nightmares

Identifying the 'Good' Asians and the 'Bad' Asians in the Writings of Low and St. John

> Every fairy tale had a bloody lining.
>
> Alice Hoffman,
> *The Ice Queen* (2006)

> All conquest literature seeks to explain to the conquerors 'why we are here'.[1]
>
> Robert Bartlett,
> *The Making of Europe* (1993)

I. Fairy Tale Beginnings: Hugh Low Spins the Tale of Sarawak's 'Redemption'

> Little or nothing decisive could be achieved without the co-operation of our Englishman.[2]
>
> Hugh Low,
> *Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions* (1848)

Empires are seldom born out of wedlock, for they are the result of the union of power and knowledge. But the sanguinary aspect of empire-building was often tidied up later by the imperial knowledge-producers whose task it was to account for that birth and how that empire came to be. After the blood-letting and bursting of shells and rockets would come the modalities of data-collecting and analysis. And the study of the defeated natives – their bodies, their land, and all the living things that flew, swam and crept around them – would furnish the gloss of scientific enquiry that made empire-building palatable to those who would otherwise have recoiled at the sight of native settlements razed to the ground by gunboats in action.

One such data-collector and knowledge-producer was the son of the Scottish horticulturist Hugh Low (1824-1905).[3] Low's father – Hugh Low

1 Bartlett, 1993: 96.

2 Low, 1848: xviii

3 In his early twenties Low was sent on an expedition to Southeast Asia to collect plants for research, where he came into contact with the former East India Company officer James Brooke.

Senior – had sent his son to Southeast Asia to collect some rare plants that might be cultivated back in Britain. Green as grass and keen as mustard Low did as he was told and set off for Southeast Asia. But Low the Younger tarried longer than he should have, and ended up staying in Southeast Asia until 1889. By the time he retired from service he had been witness to the birth of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Kingdom of the so-called 'White Rajah' of Sarawak, and had served both in Borneo and British Malaya. The amateur naturalist from Upper Clapton would evolve to become the first 'model' British colonial Resident in Malaya, but our interest in him lies in his writing in particular. For not only would Low develop the model for colonial economic management and race relations in the decades to come, he would also show – in his writing – how the colonial power viewed and framed the native Others who were now caught in the gaze of Empire.

In 1848 Low's *Sarawak; Its Inhabitants and Productions; Being Notes During a Residence in that Country with H. H. The Rajah Brooke* was published in London by the publisher Richard Bentley, publisher ordinary to the Crown of England. Low completed the manuscript of *Sarawak* while he was in Leiden, and it was dedicated to James Brooke who was at that time not only the self-proclaimed ruler of Sarawak but also the British Commissioner in Borneo and the Governor of Labuan.[4] The author claimed in his dedication that his was the very first work on the subject of the natives of Sarawak – though in fact there had been other studies of Borneo done earlier, such as Hunt's report on the whole of Borneo that was submitted to Raffles in 1812. (Hunt, 1812, 1846) – and that the work he wrote was the result of long periods of fieldwork and data-gathering. Low had spent thirty months in Sarawak and the West coast of Borneo, which he stated was longer than any other European before him; and he was particularly thankful to Brooke for giving him the opportunity to visit the land and live among the local populations there. Low also expressed his gratitude to the Earl of Auckland, to whom he was 'under the greatest obligations for letters to the Official

Following the defeat of Brunei at the hands of the British in 1846 Brooke was promoted to the rank of Governor of Labuan Island, and it was Brooke who then promoted Low to serve as his colonial secretary between 1848 to 1850. So strong was Low's attachment to Brooke that he even named his son after him – Hugo Brooke Low.

4 In his dedication to Brooke Low wrote: 'In availing myself of your kind permission to dedicate to you the following work, I discharge with pleasure the duty under which the author of the first volume professing to treat the inhabitants of Sarawak, lies; and if I am fortunate in securing for it your approbation, I shall consider the time I have devoted to it to have been profitably spent'. (Low, 1848: i)

Residents in the Straits Settlements', and to Governor Lieutenant-Colonel Butterworth, who 'by every means of his power, forwarded the objects of the expedition'.[5]

Notwithstanding the disclaimers that he added at the beginning of his work, Low had indeed amassed an enormous amount of information about the geography, climate and communities of Sarawak – that would have also been useful to the Brooke administration. The first Chapter of *Sarawak* looked at the geography of the entire island of Borneo, and identified the areas that were by then under British and Dutch rule respectively.[6] He noted that coal had been discovered on the island of Labuan (which was the reason why it was seen as a prize by the British), and antimony and gold were to be found in Sarawak too.[7] Chapter two of *Sarawak* looked at the temperature and soil of Borneo, and the kinds of plants that grew there and could be cultivated for commercial purposes. Low noted that among the types of plants that grew easily in Borneo were sugar cane, bamboo, rice, coconut, sago, camphor, pepper, coffee, dammar and various types of timber.[8] Chapter three of the book focused on animal life, and Low wrote at length about the types of cats (including panthers) that could be found, as well as monkeys, orangutans, alligators, lizards, snakes, vipers and all kinds of assorted creepy-crawlies that presumably snuck up to him while he was in the jungle.[9]

Low's study of the natives of Borneo only begins from chapter four onwards: chapters four and five looked at the Malays of Sarawak and Brunei, and their connections with the Bugis of Sulawesi.[10] His treatment of Sarawak included a long description of the Malays there, their chiefs and their laws, and the manner in which the Malays organized their economy. On the subject of Malay warfare and weapons, Low noted that though the Malays' preference for raiding at sea had not diminished, they were by then inclined to adapt to Western modes of fighting and had taken to modern weapons such as muskets.[11] (Which was not, incidentally, a

5 Low, 1848: vii.

6 Low, 1848: 1-29.

7 Low, 1848: 12-13, 17-19, 20, 21-22, 25.

8 Low, 1848: 30-70.

9 Low, 1848: 71-92.

10 Low, 1848: 93-95.

11 Low wrote that 'the wars of Sarawak are like those of most nations in a similar state of civilization; long, protracted, but very bloodless, and the account of the manner of conducting the operations against the rebels of Sarawak, detailed in Mr. Brooke's journal, published in Keppel's book, is the narrative of all their bloodless campaigns. [...] There are now belonging to Sarawak, and which are kept constantly ready for service, eight large war-boats, which can each

new development for Southeast Asians had been using guns since the 16th century and the Malaccans defended themselves against the Portuguese invasion of 1511 with the use of Southeast Asian-made canons and matchlock arquebuses.)

The Sea Dayaks were the subject of chapters six and seven, as Low recounted to his readers the manners, customs and beliefs of these people. He wrote about their superstitions and rituals, as well as the rites of passage among them. While he lamented their 'laxity of manners' he seemed more obsessed by the head-hunting rituals of the Dayaks and gave a rather vivid account of how a captured head was treated by its new owner.[12] Low did not forget to add the Sea Dayaks were now ever so grateful to James Brooke for bringing the local wars to an end, for 'what pleasure they hailed the return of peace, which Mr. Brooke's arrival promised them; and the gratitude they now feel, and the affection with which they regard the man who saved their residue from starvation, slavery and death' was certainly too important not to be recorded in writing.[13]

Chapters eight and nine looked at the Hill Dayaks and the Land Dayaks in turn; considering their relationship with their ancestral land and their veneration of certain plants.[14] Low described the Dayak assemblies where the different chiefs would meet, the nature of this 'Dayak Parliament', their local understanding of medicine and the manner in which Dayak healers performed surgery. The tenth and final chapter then looked at the Kyans (Kayans) – 'foes of the Dayaks' – as well as some of the smaller tribes to be found in Sarawak such as the Milanowes (Melanau), Meris, Rejans, Kadyans and Badjus (Bajao) Laut sea-nomads.[15]

Low ended his tenth chapter with some remarks about Britain's presence in Sarawak, and of the rivalry between the British and the Dutch in the island of Borneo: He sought 'other openings for British enterprise' on the island that would be free from Malay influence, and like his patron and mentor Brooke

carry sixty men, and one six-pounder gun. The weapons in use among the natives are primarily spears and swords, the *kris* being not here so much in repute as among the people of the north, whose *krises* are much larger and serviceable weapons than those used by the Javans and the Malays in the western part of the Archipelago. [...] The bow and arrow, if they ever used these weapons, have now entirely given way to the musket, which is in such general repute among the nations of the Archipelago as to be an article of greater traffic than almost any other commodity of Western manufacture'. (Low, 1848: 161-163.)

12 Low, 1848: 165-205, 206-238.

13 Low, 1848: 190.

14 Low, 1848: 239-277, 278-320.

15 Chapters 11, 12 and 13 of Low's work consisted mainly of narrative accounts of his journeys in the country.

he held scant regard for Malay politics. Now that Sarawak was under the rule of an Englishman, there was no longer the need to spend time on the empty formalities of native politics and courtly protocols – as Sarawak was Brooke's and the kingdom of Brunei had been laid low. Low noted that opportunities for further British penetration into interior Borneo existed 'in the facilities of communication presented with the Kyan countries by the rivers Bintulu and Barram, which have hitherto been unvisited by Europeans'.[16] Hopeful that the port of Labuan – now under British rule – would flourish, Low was keen to ensure that the British would not be out-manoeuvred in Borneo by the Dutch, for 'of all nations, the Dutch have, perhaps, with the exception of the English East India Company, acquired the best information regarding their colonies'.[17]

Here, in his closing remarks at the end of chapter ten, we see how Low has revealed his own intentions: The data-gathering he had done was in the service of the Crown of England, and the aim of his mission was to gather as much information as he could about the island of Borneo and its people so as not to be left in the dark by the Dutch who were precariously close by, and whose appetite for data and statistics matched their own. Between these two data-devouring imperial powers every scrap of information was to be fought for, and every little thing learned was an asset denied to the other. By the end of his work it is evident that Low's data gathering was not the hobby of a dilettante, but rather a studied and deliberate endeavour from beginning to end. Concerned about the presence of the Dutch who had busied themselves with the task of collecting all the information they could gain about their own colonies, Low's work was part of a greater effort to ensure that Britain and the East India Company would not fall behind in the data-race between the two rival powers. It cannot be denied that Low had been thorough in his work; and the meticulous way in which he had gathered all the data he could lay his hands on reminds us of another extraordinary East India Company data-gatherer, John Anderson (1826), whose data-gathering mission in Sumatra we have looked at elsewhere.[18] (Noor, 2016.a)

But despite his thoroughness and the manner in which he had assembled all this information into a well-organized work, Low had been silent on one

16 Low, 1848: 346-347.

17 Low, 1848: 347.

18 Anderson, John. *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra In MDCCCXXIII, under the direction of the Government of Prince of Wales Island.* London: William Blackwood, Edinburgh, and T. Cadell, Strand. 1826.

point: At no point did he ever raise the question of how and why the British were in Borneo in the first place, and by what right did they (or the Dutch for that matter) have claims on the island?

The manner in which Sarawak was acquired by James Brooke is perhaps the most interesting story that Low never really told, and the closest that the reader gets to a summary account of the establishment of the Brooke kingdom came right at the beginning of Low's *Sarawak*; and what a fairy tale it was too. Unlike the accounts of the Sarawak campaign and Brooke's 'war on piracy' that are found in the works of Keppel (1846), Mundy (1848) and Marryat (1848) – all of which went into considerable detail about Brooke's intentions and Britain's strategic-economic interests in Borneo – Low's account of Sarawak was written after the land had been acquired by Brooke and focused instead on the present state of native affairs in the kingdom.

The imperial fairy-tale began on page xiii of Low's work, as he introduced James Brooke to his readers. Beginning with the bare facts of Brooke's birth – on 29 April 1803 at Coombe Grove, near Bath – he directed his readers' attention to Brooke's lineage, noting that he was 'descended by both parents from ancient families, (and) is the lineal representative of Sir Robert Viner, Baronet, Lord Mayor of London in the reign of Charles II'.[19] 'Designed for military service of the East India Company', James Brooke's 'gallantry was so conspicuous that he received the thanks of the Government'.[20] Yet Brooke was not destined to remain long in the service of the East India Company's private army, for he would be wounded during one of the battles of the First Anglo-Burmese War and thereafter repaired to London to recover. Later while on a journey to China Brooke had seen the coast of Borneo for the first time, and was struck by 'their natural riches and incomparable beauty' that seemed within his reach.[21]

Brooke would return again to Borneo aboard his own schooner *The Royalist* – the purchase of which was rendered all the easier owing to the death of his wealthy father and his inheriting a handsome fortune. At Sarawak he would meet Rajah Muda Hassim, whereupon he was told that rebellion stalked the land.[22] Upon his second visit to Borneo in 1840 Brooke 'found the civil war pretty much as he had left it' (though he did pretty little the

19 Low, 1848: xiv.

20 Low, 1848: xiv.

21 Low, 1848: xv.

22 James Brooke had been sent to Sarawak by the Governor of Singapore in order to convey the thanks of the British authorities to Rajah Muda Hassim, the official Regent of the Sultan of Brunei posted there, for the help he had given to some British sailors whose ship had been stranded off the mouth of the Sarawak river. Keppel (1846) has noted that Brooke presented the Raja Muda Hassim gifts of silk and gunpowder to win his support. (Keppel, 1846. vol. 1. pp. 14-15.)

first time he was there); but 'the Sultan of Bruni (Brunei) was now bestirring himself', for 'it was found that little or nothing decisive could be achieved without the co-operation of our Englishman'.[23] So great were Brooke's powers and influence that nothing seemed to move in Borneo in his absence, and even civil wars could only come to an end when he was around. Sure enough, the rebellion was at length put down and everyone could breathe again now that Brooke was back in Borneo.

Then, as Low's fairy tale goes, the Rajah Muda Hassim found himself 'tired of Sarawak' for no explicable reason. Apparently bored with his duties, the Rajah promptly handed over the territory of Sarawak to Brooke on 24 September 1841.[24] What is totally absent from Low's rose-tinted account of Brooke's rise to prominence is the fact that Brooke, at the head of his private force of two hundred men and with the guns of *The Royalist* supporting him, had surrounded Rajah Muda Hassim's compound and had forced the latter to concede to his demands.[25] Yet Low's fairy tale continues as he recounted how the Sultan of Brunei likewise happily gave away a substantial chunk of his kingdom's territory – 'a demi-civilized state' – for no comprehensible reason on 8 February 1843, despite the fact that Sarawak's antimony trade was crucial to the economic health of the Brunei kingdom.[26] As far as imperial fairy tale heroes go, Low's Brooke fitted the bill in many ways: nothing could be done in his absence or without his benevolent guidance; he could vanquish entire pirate fleets with no loss of composure; Asiatic monarchs would surrender their ancestral lands to him for nothing; and the man was motivated by only the best motives 'to do good, to excite interest and to make friends'.[27] Low's Brooke possessed the wealth of Mr. Darcy but had none of his snobbishness; and his guns were rather big, too.

But heroes would be nothing without their villainous counterparts, and in his introduction Low conjured up the most menacing anti-hero of all:

23 Low, 1848: xviii.

24 In his somewhat fanciful introduction, Low chose not to highlight the fact that the terms and conditions of Brooke's engagement with the Regent of Brunei were not clear at all. For James Brooke was a private merchant who did not have the authority to represent the British Crown, while the Rajah Muda Hassim was only the heir-presumptive Regent of Brunei, and as such had no right to relinquish control over Sarawak to anyone, let alone offer Brooke the title of Rajah of Sarawak.

25 Knapman (2017) notes that Brooke had earlier demanded payment from the Rajah Muda in the form of a transaction of antimony. Upon his return to Sarawak the Rajah Muda was unable or unwilling to abide by their deal and that was used as the justification for Brooke's attack on the Raja Muda's compound and his threat to begin an uprising. Knapman, 2017: 158-160, 161.

26 Knapman, 2017: 159.

27 Low, 1848: xix.

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II of Brunei (1799-1852, r. 1829-1852). By then the trope of the Asiatic despot had become all-too-familiar in the Orientalist constructions of native power in Southeast Asia, and as we have seen in Crawfurd's portrayal of King Bagyidaw in his *Embassy to Ava* (1829) and Raffles' depiction of the Sultan of Jogjakarta (1817) earlier, the stereotype of the erratic and despotic Southeast Asian ruler was already old hat by the time Low took to his pen. What is missing in Low's account of Brooke's conflict with Brunei is the perspective of the Other, and the consideration that Sultan Omar of Brunei – like the ruler of Burma – was concerned about Western political intervention into his domain and wished to keep all Westerners, British and Dutch alike, at arm's length for as long as possible.[28] If Low's Brooke was the epitome of upright English manliness, his portrayal of the Sultan Omar of Brunei was the diametrical opposite: After so generously giving away more than half of his territory to Brooke, the Sultan seems to have had a change of heart. In Low's words:

> Scarcely had these events taken place, when the Sultan, who had been accounted imbecile and a mere cypher, was discovered to be not without treachery, and the means of effecting it. He caused Muda Hassim and many others to be murdered, because they were friendly to the English; and he had employed a wretch [...] to poison him.[29]

What followed was a fiery clash of arms as the British navy attacked the port-city of Brunei. In the monochromatic account that Low penned, good triumphed over evil and the ever-capable Rajah Brooke 'had returned to Bruni (Brunei) for the purpose of restoring order'.[30] Brooke's war against piracy – that was conceived and articulated in the vaguest of terms[31] – ultimately culminated in the defeat of Brunei and the seizure of Labuan Island on 24 December 1846, and the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce on 27 May 1847 – whereby Brunei was forced to give up several

28 Knapman, 2017: 160.

29 Low, 1848: xxii-xxiii.

30 Brooke had opined that 'Such is the miserable state of things (in Borneo); such is the wretched condition of a country where the choicest productions, mineral and vegetable, abound; so miserable, indeed, that I believe that in spite of my former prepossessions in favour of a Malay state, that any change must be for the better, and I do not believe that any change would be resisted by the people'. (Brooke in Mundy, 1848, vol. 1. p. 190.)

31 Knapman has noted that 'labelling rebellious tribes as pirates enabled Brooke to call upon British naval power to entrench his regime in Sarawak', but at the same time 'Brooke was stretching the boundaries of what the British government considered was piracy' too. Knapman, 2017: 166, 167.

other smaller islands and was henceforth bound never to cede any more of its territory to any other foreign nation[32] (See Appendix D). In his boundless enthusiasm to paint Brooke in such a heroic light, Low had omitted the fact that the campaign against Brunei was the result of Brooke's incessant prompting that British power should be paramount over all of Borneo and that Labuan Island ought to be in British hands, turned into a permanent commercial colony that would match Singapore.[33] This was music to the ears of British officials and East India Company-men such as John Crawfurd, who had also served as the Governor-Resident of Singapore.[34] Following the defeat of Brunei the Sultan 'was permitted to return to Bruni, whence he wrote Mr. Brooke a penitential letter, imploring forgiveness and promising amendment'[35] – or so the story goes.

The fairy tale that Low introduces at the beginning of his work also set the stage for the acquisition of data and intelligence that came soon after. After all, Low was a guest of James Brooke in Sarawak, and it was to Brooke – and not the natives of Sarawak – that he was indebted. In glossing over the circumstances of Brooke's coming to power, Low effectively swept aside some of Brooke's own disparaging remarks about the Sultan of Brunei and the Malays of Borneo in general. (Brooke had described the kingdom as a 'spectacle of a government without a real head', owing to the power struggle that was taking place between the different contenders to the throne, Omar Ali and Rajah Api.[36]) Thus had Low toned down the scale of Brooke's personal ambition, and how he had wished to see British

32 Article X of the Treaty stated that: 'His Highness the Sultan hereby confirms the cession already spontaneously made by him in 1845 of the Island of Labuan, situated on the north-west coast of Borneo, together with the adjacent islets of Kuraman, Little Rusukan, Great Rusukan, Da-at, and Malankasan, and all the straits, islets, and seas situated half-way between the forementioned islets and the mainland of Borneo. […] And *in order to avoid occasions of difference which might otherwise arise, His Highness the Sultan engages not to make any similar cession, either of an island or of any settlement on the mainland, in any part of his dominions, to any other nation*, or to the subjects or citizens thereof, without the consent of Her Britannic Majesty. (*Emphasis mine*.)

33 As Bachamiya (2006) has noted, 'Singapore's success (as a free port) revived British interest in North Borneo again. After the formation of the British Straits Settlements in 1826, they spread their wings in Peninsula Malaya. The trade route from China to the Malay Peninsula gained further importance'. (Bachamiya, 2006: 5.)

34 John Crawfurd had served as the Governor-Resident of Singapore and he had argued that 'the position of Labuan will render it most convenient for the suppressing of piracy', while also giving Britain and the East India Company a tactical advantage over Brunei, Sulu and the Dutch in Borneo. (Crawfurd, quoted in Keppel, 1846. vol.2. pp. 212-226.)

35 Low, 1848: xxiv.

36 Brooke in Mundy, 1848, vol. 1, pp. 183-184.

power grow across Borneo, for he had hoped that 'English influence over the government of Borneo would be complete'.[37] Low made no mention of the final attack on Brunei on 8 July 1846 that was sparked by the killing of Pangeran Budrudeen and Rajah Muda Hassim – both allies of Brooke[38]; or of the use of superior arms – steam-powered ironsides and gunboats – that blasted the port-city's defences.[39]

Following the defeat of Brunei, the Sultan granted to Brooke the right to rule Sarawak as its Rajah, and also ceded to him extensive mining rights throughout the land of Sarawak. Henceforth it would be an Englishman who would sit upon the throne of Sarawak, and what mattered most was that order had been restored. And this was a *British* order that allowed British subjects to move about the land unhindered, as they set about to know more about the Sarawak that was now under their control. It was upon the ruins of native defeat that a new order of colonial knowledge and power would soon be built.

II. Knowing the Difference: Differentiating Between the 'Good' and the 'Bad' Asians in the works of Hugh Low and Spenser St. John

> A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.
>
> William James

From such fairy tale beginnings were the epistemologies of Empire born.

Hugh Low's career had peaked during his time in Sarawak and Labuan, and such a claim is not to be taken metaphorically. He had *literally* gone higher than any other Englishman in Borneo during his stay there, and his skyward ascent can even be measured accurately: 13,435 feet above sea level, to be exact, which was the peak of Mount Kinabalu that he climbed up to, and that was later named after him (and is still known today as Low's Peak). Low would later be posted to the court of Perak in 1877, where his career would peak again, when he served as the fourth British Resident there. Back in Britain he would be valorized as one of the builders of British Malaya, and he would preside over the opening up of Malay lands to foreign

37 Brooke in Mundy, 1848, vol. 2, p. 25.
38 Mundy, 1848, vol. 2, p. 142.
39 Mundy, 1848, vol. 2, pp. 145-152.

capital and their eventual exploitation. As an added flourish the naturalist-turned-colonial Resident and administrator would later have several species of plants and animals named after him, such as the *Rhododendron lowii*, the *Paphiopedilum lowii* orchid, the *Sundasciurus lowii* squirrel and the *Papilio lowii* butterfly.

But Low would be remembered for his studies on the *humans* of Borneo, and not the creatures and bugs that came under his magnifying glass. In his study of the society and customs of the peoples of Sarawak, Low had introduced the logic of racial difference and racial hierarchies – following in the footsteps of like-minded men of the Company such as John Crawfurd who subscribed to the theory of polygenesis and who had previously divided the communities of maritime Southeast Asia into five distinct groups of natives, *all* of whom were deemed racially inferior to Europeans. Low's view of the natives of Sarawak was not original, and in many ways mirrored those of James Brooke whom he clearly admired. Brooke had considered the 'wild' natives of Sarawak as being 'in a low condition' when he found them, and wrote that he considered them 'capable of being easily raised in the scale of society' – but only under British tutelage.[40] Himself an amateur in all things, Brooke tried his hand at some crude pseudo-scientific studies of the Dayaks of Sarawak, with the occasional foray into craniometry.[41] He was less charitable towards the Malays, whose form of 'governments were so bad', that 'any attempt to govern without a change of these abuses would be impossible.'[42] He thought that Brunei was in a 'miserable state'[43] and the Sultan of Brunei – though 'by no means cruel' – was seen by him as a ruler 'with a countenance which expresses very obviously the imbecility of his mind [...] His mind, indexed by his face, seems to be a chaos of confusion; without acuteness, without dignity and without good sense'.[44] Somewhere at the bottom of Brooke's hierarchy of Asiatic races were the Chinese, whom he felt were 'corrupt, supple and exacting, yielding to their superiors and tyrannical to those who fall under their power.'[45]

40 Brooke, in Keppel, 1846, vol. 1. p. 59.
41 Keppel, 1846. vol. 1. pp. 52-55.
42 Brooke, in Keppel, 1846, vol. 1. p. 211.
43 Brooke, in Keppel, 1846, vol. 1. p. 332.
44 Brooke, in Keppel, 1846, vol. 1. p. 328.
45 Brooke, in Mundy, 1848, vol. 1, pp. 9-10, 108-109. As Runciman has noted, 'Brooke was not attracted by the Chinese. They seemed to him ugly and ungainly, with complexions like corpses; but he wrote admiringly of their industry and their respect for education. (Runciman, 1960: 49-50.)

This view of the Chinese – as both a boon and a potential threat to British colonial-capitalism – was shared by Low as well. Low had written about the role of the Chinese in the mining of gold at Sambas, and how gold mining had declined as a result of the misunderstandings between the Dutch and the Chinese there.[46] Though the focus of his own work was on the natives of Borneo, Low was of the opinion that the Chinese could not be trusted and that they were constantly preying upon the natives of Sarawak whenever they could; and he was particularly concerned about the manner in which the Bajao Laut sea-nomads were being deceived by the 'cunning Chinese merchants' who contrived to keep them in a state of poverty and debt.[47]

In these instances were see the return of an idea introduced by Raffles in his *Regulations* of 1814; namely, the distinction between the 'local' natives of Southeast Asia and 'foreign' Asians who have migrated to it or were brought there. In Raffles' *Regulations* the distinction between local and foreign Asians was primarily a *legal* one that endowed the two groups with different legal rights and obligations. But in the works that were written and published later from the 1840s to the 1860s such distinctions were about to given a deeper, essentialized meaning. The time and circumstances were right for the introduction of racialized colonial-capitalism, with its attendant pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference.

Low had admitted in the introduction of his *Sarawak* that his was a hurried job, and that he regretted the fact that he had left many of his notes back in Borneo when we wrote his work later in Europe. Hurried though his writing may have been, what is really interesting about Low's book is how quickly the sanitization of colonial conquest had taken place, and how he skirted over the bloodier aspects of Brooke's campaign – unlike the works of Keppel (1846) and Mundy (1848) that appeared at the same time, and which were more explicit about the bloodier aspect of colonial warfare. Low could always maintain that unlike Keppel, Mundy and Marryat he was not a military man, and that he was more interested in the natural wonders of Borneo than the technicalities of ballistics and the combustible effects of gunpowder. But it has to be remembered that Low was only able to study the natural world of Sarawak because that world had been taken by force of arms, and that his sojourn in the land was rendered possible thanks to

46 Low, 1848: 25-26.

47 In the tenth chapter of his book Low wrote about the Bajao Laut, 'who are mostly employed by Chinese merchants to fish for them, and, it is said that these cunning traders invariably contrive to keep these poor people in debt, so as to secure their continued services'. (Low, 1848: 345-346.)

his own subject-position as a British citizen who happened to be on the winning side of the Borneo campaign.

More than a decade later another work on the geography and society of Sarawak would appear: Spenser St. John's two-volume *Life in the Forests of the Far East* (1862). St. John's book appeared in the same year that France emerged victorious at the end of the Cochinchina campaign, and though Emperor Tu Duc had been reluctant to suffer any further losses the signing of the Treaty of Saigon meant that France would gain three more provinces in Cochinchina. Across Southeast Asia native polities were being browbeaten, and by then Sarawak had come under the rule of the Brooke dynasty in no uncertain terms. (In 1868 James Brooke would be succeeded by his nephew Charles Brooke (1829-1917).) Hugh Low had compartmentalized the different communities of Sarawak into separate and distinct categories as he went about his research, but it was St. John who really reinforced these divisions even further in his longer, more detailed study.

Spenser Buckingham St. John (1825-1910) was an old acquaintance of Hugh Low and both of them had served in Borneo before. If Low had managed to reach the peak of Mount Kinabalu – and have the highest peak named after him for posterity – St. John was not left far behind: The second highest peak of Mount Kinabalu (that was a mere thirteen feet lower than Low's peak) was named St. John's Peak in his honour. The son of the writer and traveller James Augustus St. John (1795-1875) – famed author of *Abdallah; an Oriental Poem: in three cantos* (1824), *The History, Manners and Customs of the Hindus* (1831) and *Oriental Album: Characters, costumes, and modes of life, in the valley of the Nile* (1848) – he was well acquainted with Orientalist writing from an early age. It was his father who would introduce him to James Brooke in England, and he subsequently set out to Southeast Asia to serve as Brooke's personal private secretary, while his brother James Augustus Junior would also serve under Brooke. St. John's father was among those who had promoted the idea that maritime Southeast Asia was a den of pirates, and they both believed that the 'hand of nature' had shaped the region and its people thus.[48] While serving under Brooke, St. John secretaried the manners and worldview of his patron-mentor, until he was himself appointed Consul General to the Kingdom of Brunei. So enamoured was he by Brooke that he would later write one of the first glowing hagiographies of the man in 1899.[49] St. John would serve as Britain's Consul in Brunei from 1856 to 1858,

48 Knapman, 2017: 190.

49 St. John, Sir Spenser Buckingham. *Rajah Brooke: The Englishman as Ruler of an Eastern State*. New York: Longman. 1899.

at a time when the star of England was in the ascendant: the Second Opium War of 1856-1860 would lead to the weakening of China, the opening up of more Chinese ports and the Treaty of Tianjin would finally allow British, French and Russian diplomats to reside permanently in Beijing after the war. That Britain was leading the way in the opening up of China at the time may have influenced St. John's own views about China and the Chinese, as we shall see later.

In form and content – despite the gap of fourteen years between them – St. John's *Life in the Forests of the Far East* was remarkably similar to Low's *Sarawak* in terms of its overall structure and arrangement of chapters.[50] In the introduction to his work St. John emphasised from the outset that this was a *study*, and that the communities of Sarawak were *worthy of study*:

> I persuade myself that the more the natives of Borneo are studied, the move lively will be the interest felt in them.[51]

But he also admitted that his was a systematic study that necessarily divided the communities he had looked at, and that in the course of his research his focus on each group was exclusive and singular:

> In the following pages *I have treated of the tribes in groups, and have endeavoured to give an individual interest to each*; while, to preserve the freshness of my first impressions, I have copied my journal written at the time. (*Emphasis mine.*)[52]

The interest that he wished to generate for and about the communities of Sarawak was based on the notion that they were *distinct* racial groups that were essentially different from one another, a notion that sat well within the broader theory of polygenesis that was all the rage then. In the introduction he identified the different traits and potential of each group in turn:

> *The energy displayed by the Sea Dayaks, gives much hope for their advancement in civilization at a future time*; and a few years of quiet and steady government would produce a great change in their condition. *The Land*

50 St. John alludes to the earlier work by Low at the start of his introduction, when he writes that 'the wild tribes of Borneo, and the not less wild interior of the country, are scarcely known to European readers, as no one who has traveled in the island during the last fourteen years has given his impression to the public'. (St. John, 1862: vol.1. 1)

51 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 2.

52 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 1.

> *Dayaks scarcely display the same aptitude for improvement*, but patience may do much with them also; their modes of thought, their customs, and the traces of Hinduism in their religion, *render them a very singular and interesting people*. Of the Kayans we know less; and I have only been able to give an account of one journey I made among them. *They are a strange, warlike race,* who are destined greatly to influence the surrounding tribes. They have already penetrated to within thirty miles of Brunei, the capital, spreading desolation in their path. (*Emphasis mine.*)[53]

Exactly how St. John had come to these sweeping observations about the different communities of Sarawak – some of whom could be advanced in civilization, some of whom could not, and some of whom were simply warlike and strange – was the result of the echo chamber built around himself, thanks to his consultations with fellow Europeans – most of whom happened to be English missionaries and all of whom were presumably experts on matters exotic and strange. In the preface to his work St. John named the members of this charmed circle of savants, and they were the Reverend Walter Chambers, the Reverend William Chalmers, the Reverend William Gomez and Charles Johnson Esq.

The fact that St. John had compiled his fieldwork notes and then sent them off to the company of Chambers, Chalmers, Gomez and Johnson for fact-checking says something about how knowledge of the Other was collected, and how that data was later sifted and checked by people whom he could trust. Here we see an instance of a hermetic loop where data collected by like-minded people would then be verified by like-minded people, to be eventually digested and consumed by like-minded people who happened to also like one another. Crawfurd, as we have seen in the previous chapter, also began his investigations into the state of Burma's government and economy by speaking to and with those whom he could trust, namely fellow Englishmen and some assorted Europeans who passed muster. In both these cases, it seemed as if the opinion of the Other did not matter as they were the *objects* of knowledge and not producers of it; and once again we see an instance of the deep colonial distrust of the native Other that Bayly (1996) has detected in cases of colonial data-gathering in India as well.[54] And though St. John's stated aim was to produce a comprehensive study of the peoples, cultures and beliefs of the natives of Sarawak, the natives themselves were never consulted to check whether he got any of it right.

53 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 2-3.

54 Bayly, 1996: 6.

As I have argued elsewhere (Noor, 2018), this propensity to speak and write of the Other while never actually engaging in a meaningful discourse with the Other was a common feature of 19th century Orientalist writing and certainly not unique to St. John: Among most of the British and American authors who wrote about the peoples of Southeast Asia then there was rarely an ethical 'conversation-teaching' – to borrow the term by Lévinas – in any of their encounters.

As in the work of Low, St. John differentiated between the Sea Dayaks and the Land Dayaks. Chapters one and two of the first volume of his work looked at the Sea Dayaks of Lundu and Sakarang, touching upon details such as the architecture of their longhouses, their method of catching boars and alligators and the rites of passage among them.[55] He regarded them as a 'talkative and sociable people' and remarked that the Sea Dayaks were very intelligent – though that did not stop them from head-hunting and exacting revenge upon their adversaries.[56] Chapter three looked at the Kayans of Baram, who were portrayed as a formidable people inclined towards war and plunder.[57] St. John noted that the Kayans had a fearsome reputation and that the people of Sarawak and Brunei were alarmed by their boldness. In his meeting with Pangeran Mumein of Brunei the latter expressed his concern that the Kayans might one day take up the use of the musket and cannon, for that would mean the end of Brunei itself:

> Pangeran Mumein justly observed, that as long as the Kayans were unacquainted with the use of fire-arms, it was easy to defend the country; but that now the Bornean traders were supplying them with brass swivels and double-barrel guns, he thought that the ruin of Brunei was at hand.[58]

Chapters four, five and six then looked at the Land Dayaks, of whom St. John had a lower opinion.[59] Though he felt that the Land Dayaks were more handsome than their Sea Dayak counterparts, they were also known for their warlike ways. But St. John was relieved to note that in interior Sarawak 'the sharks and alligators do not meddle with human beings up here' at least.[60] If there was any meddling going on in interior Sarawak then, it was by those who still resisted Brooke's rule over the land; and St. John noted that his trip

55 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 5-46, 47-79.
56 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 48-49, 67, 68, 69, 70-71.
57 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 78-124.
58 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 87.
59 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 125-151, 151-167, 167-204.
60 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 138.

to the interior of Sarawak was done in the company of James Brooke himself, who had come to deal with the last pockets of resistance against his rule in the country – that came mostly from the Malay chiefs who did not recognize his authority.[61] Like Brooke, St. John wished to see the land of Sarawak pass from a state of 'native lawlessness to British superintendence'[62], and to that end he deemed it necessary to not only eradicate the remaining voices of dissent against British rule but also to protect the local natives of Sarawak whom he felt were weak, vulnerable and backward 'in common with many other barbarous tribes' of the world.[63] (Following the defeat of Burma at the end of the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885, the victorious British forces would likewise engage in a country-wide pacification-policing operation in order to eradicate those Burmans who were deemed 'rebellious' and still loyal to their deposed monarch.)

That the Land Dayaks of interior Sarawak were 'savage' and 'barbarous' was, for St. John, an obvious fact – that was probably supported by his consultations with the Reverends Chambers, Chalmers and Gomez – and their barbarity was seen by him not only in their warlike ways and customs, but also in their beliefs and religion which he regarded as 'hazy and confused'. Of the religion of the Land Dayaks St. John had this to say:

> In common with many other barbarous tribes, their religious system relates principally to this life [...] It cannot be denied that they have some belief in the Supreme God who is called "Tapa", the Creator or Maker, though their idea of Him as a moral governor is hazy and confused. They possess also some glimmerings of a future existence, though scarcely any idea of a future state of rewards and punishments.[64]

Even when he discussed the dream-state of the Dayaks, and how they believed that the soul could migrate to other alternative realities while they were dreaming, St. John remained dismissive of the belief-systems of the natives. The upshot of his observations was that the Dayaks were a people

61 As he wrote: 'Captain Brooke's principal object in making this tour was to enquire into the complaints which had been brought against (the Malay Chief) Datu Patinggi of forcing the Dayak tribes to deal with him, whether they wanted his good or not, and insisting on fixing his price on the articles supplied. The complaints were more than substantiated; even the Chinese were unable to procure rice, and were forced to content themselves with the pig trade'. (St. John, 1862: vol.1. 141.)

62 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 150.

63 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 169.

64 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 169-170.

who could not distinguish between the real and the unreal, for 'when any one dreams of a distant land, as we exiles often do, the Dayaks think that our souls have annihilated space, and paid a flying visit to Europe during the night'.[65]

The rest of volume I of *Life in the Forests* was devoted to the geography of Sarawak and North Borneo, and includes some very long accounts of his first and second attempts to climb Mount Kinabalu (chapters eight, nine and ten). By this point St. John felt that he had recounted as much as he could about the local natives of Sarawak, and that the portrait he had painted of them was a comprehensive one. Described as a group of backward, superstitious and warlike races, the natives of Sarawak had been studied and St. John's conclusion was clear: The British were present in Sarawak on a civilizing mission, and to bring law and prosperity to all. But for this colonial drama to be enacted in full, there would always be the need for a host of villains as well. And the enemies of British law and order were conveniently close by, as he would elaborate in the second volume of his work.

III. Protecting the Natives from other Asiatics: St. John's negative portrayal of Malays and Chinese as the oppressors of the Borneans

> The basic fear of the colonial official or settler was [...] his lack of indigenous knowledge and ignorance of the wiles of the natives.[66]
>
> Christopher Alan Bayly,
> *Empire and Information* (1996)

Volume II of St. John;s *Life in the Forests* reads somewhat unevenly compared to volume I. For starters, the author had devoted seven chapters of the volume to his Limbang journal, being a highly detailed – though admittedly monotonous and yawn-inducing – account of his expedition to explore the interior of Borneo.[67] Chapters eight and nine were devoted to the Sulu islands, where he felt that the Sulu people were 'lax and ignorant' in their

65 St. John, 1862: vol.1. 189.
66 Bayly, 1996: 6.
67 St John, 1862: vol.2. 1-15, 16- 48, 49- 79, 80- 108, 109-130, 131- 153.

religious beliefs[68] and where 'half-bred Arabs' had corrupted the natives as well.[69] It was in chapters ten, twelve and thirteen that he focused on two particular communities that would loom large in his analysis of race relations in Sarawak, and his defence of British intervention in Borneo: the Malays and the Chinese.

III.A. Spenser St. John's construction of the 'Malay threat'

> 'This (may be) very new to you; but Malay man always go on this way; he has no friends. Englishmen don't like him, because they say he damned rascal, always ready for a fight, but won't work. Too much of a gentleman, Sir, for the East India Company. The Company want fellows they can kick'.[70]
>
> Testimony of the interpreter Jamboo,
> from Sherard Osborn's *The Blockade of Kedah* (1857)

St. John's chapters on the Malays and Chinese of Borneo are revealing in many respects. In them he develops two very different Asiatic archetypes that fit neatly into the divisive logic of racialized colonial-capitalism, and that would serve as the justification for a British military presence in Borneo. The final result would be a somewhat complex ethnic-racial map of Borneo that presents the 'local' natives of the island – the Land and Sea Dayaks, and other tribes – as a group of vulnerable aborigines in need of protection from the inconstant Malays as well as the rapacious Chinese.

The Malays that St. John wrote about were the Malays of the kingdom of Brunei, which had been defeated and whose territories were lost more than a decade earlier. His regard for the Malays of Borneo was not entirely bereft of nuance. On some occasions he did dwell upon their capabilities as merchants and traders (now diminished, thanks to the loss of the island of Labuan and Britain's growing control of the trade routes along the northern coast of Borneo), as well as their skill as mariners. Now and then he would pay them the odd compliment, as when he noted that 'Malay cookery is sometimes very tasty',[71] and admitted that he too had grown accustomed to Malay cooking and was particular fond of *sambal* and *blachang* (*belacan*,

68 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 192.
69 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 183.
70 Osborn, 1857: 321.
71 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 42.

a form of dried shrimp paste used in Malay dishes).[72] But *belacan* alone would not be enough to spare the Malays from the barbed denunciations St. John would throw their way. His account of the state of affairs in Brunei (in chapter ten) was perhaps the most damning of all, and it was in that chapter that he would present Malay politics, economics, customs and beliefs in the most negative light.

Fourteen years had passed since Low's *Sarawak* was published in 1848 and by the time St. John published his *Life in the Forests* Brunei had undergone many changes, none for the better as far as the Bruneians were concerned. The East Archipelago Company (founded by Henry Wise) had gained the right to mine coal on the island of Labuan and Brunei was no longer the bustling commercial centre of old. Commercial traffic had been diverted to the free ports under British control, trade had declined and the coffers of the kingdom were running dry – in the same way that the Burmese kingdom of Ava had begun to decline in the wake of the First Anglo-Burmese War and the loss of the coastal trading ports of Arakan and Tenasserim. By the time he wrote his work St. John noted that Brunei was one of those Asiatic kingdoms 'possessing the semblance of independent government' and was the sort of Southeast Asian polity 'we may hope is passing away'.[73]

In the same way that John Crawfurd had directed most of his criticism of Burma to the person of its ruler King Bagyidaw, so did St. John devote most of his critical observations to Sultan Abdul Momin (1788-1885, r. 1852-1885). Of the Sultan himself, he wrote that:

> He is in general a well-meaning man, but tainted by a grasping avarice. Neither in theory nor in practice is the Sultan despotic: (for) he must consult on all great occasions with his chief officers, and all important documents should bear at least two of their seals.[74]

Though he claimed that 'it is not my object to give an account of the Malays', St. John did precisely that as much of the chapter focused on the customs and manners of the Malays of Brunei, and the personage of their

72 St. John wrote that 'the triumph of Malay cookery is to send in the sambals in perfection, particularly the one called blachang; the best is composed of the very finest prawns, caught, I imagine soon after the little ones have burst from their eggs, and pounded up with red chillies, and a little ginger'. (St. John, 1862: vol.2, 42)

73 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 245.

74 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 245.

ruler in particular.[75] He derived some apparent delight when he described the dilapidated condition of the palace of Brunei – though he offered no explanation of how and why the kingdom's fortunes had declined, for that would have meant discussing the role of Britain in Brunei's downfall too. Instead he turns the reader's attention to the sorry state of the royal palace when he wrote that:

> [...] it is nothing like the gorgeous palaces of Western Asia; the Sultan's house consists of a long building like a rough barn, raised on posts in the water.[76]

Apart from the Sultan himself, St. John was dismissive of the nobility and aristocracy of Brunei as well, whom he depicted as a parasitic class that preyed upon their own populace:

> Every descendent of a noble family, whether legitimate or illegitimate, is entitled to call himself pangeran, or ampuan, which causes the country to swarm with these poverty-stricken gentlemen, *who are a curse to the industrious classes*. Nearly every district belongs to some particular family, which by usage possesses an almost unchallengeable power over the people, and is thus removed from the control of the government. Many districts are divided among various families, who have each certain villages, and live on the amount they can obtain by taxes or forced trade. [...] Those who do not possess any particular districts, endeavour to obtain a living by pressing from the aborigines all that their Malay chiefs have left them. (*Emphasis mine*.)[77]

St. John's view of the state of governance in Brunei was a disparaging one, as he noted that 'the central government is gradually falling into decay' while the nobles 'carry on a system of plunder unintelligible in other countries'.[78] Consequently 'even in the capital itself justice is not to be obtained', as the rot emanated from the centre of power itself.[79]

As Crawfurd had done in his *Embassy to Ava*, St. John's *Life in the Forests* likewise provided a report of the kingdom of Brunei that encompassed the

75 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 262.
76 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 262-263.
77 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 247.
78 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 247, 248.
79 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 250.

state of its economy and its defences too. Brunei was already on the ropes, and it was clear that the fiscal health of the kingdom was in a precarious state, for 'the whole direct revenue of the Sultan does not exceed 2,500*l.* a year, except what he may obtain in produce from his dependent tribes, which scarcely supports the current expenses of his household'.[80] And Brunei's defensive capabilities had by then declined to such an extent that it could no longer defend itself, much less pose a threat to British interests in Labuan and Sarawak:

> The Brunei government possesses no armed force beyond the power of calling out the population as militia, who rarely respond to the call, as they are neither fed nor paid during their time of service, and are generally required to perform acts repugnant to their real interests. It possesses neither war boats nor police, *and is incapable of organizing an expedition to attack a neighbouring district, and is, without exception, one of the most contemptible semblances of power that ever existed*. As I have said before, it has the name of a government, but not the reality. (*Emphasis mine*.)[81]

So broad was St. John's sweeping condemnation of Brunei and its ruling class that he even devoted some of his attention to the state of public morals among the folk of the kingdom. The women were said to be 'adept in the art of procuring abortions' and 'they are never taught morality when young, and they eagerly follow in the footsteps of their elders'.[82] Appealing to the Victorian sensibilities of his readers back home, the picture of Bruneian society that he drew was indeed a lurid one, laced with tales of marital infidelities, cuckolds and lotharios. St. John's verdict was damning as it was final: 'I believe Brunei to be the most immoral city of which I have heard'[83] – though it has to be said that such racy depictions of life in the tropics were neither new nor unique, and other British writers like Anna Harriette Leonowens would also produce equally lurid and over-sensualised accounts of 'harem life' in the East in the years to come.[84]

The contemporary reader should not be all that surprised by the fact that St. John had devoted a whole chapter of his work to writing off an entire kingdom and race of people. After all, Crawfurd had written an

80 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 274.
81 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 274.
82 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 261.
83 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 261.
84 Leonowens, Anna Harriette. *The Romance of the Harem*. 1873.

entire book that wrote off the Burmese nation, whom he had cast as a degraded people living under the state of Oriental tyranny. That St. John's chapter on Brunei reads like an intelligent report on the state of the beleaguered kingdom's economy, politics and defences should not come as a surprise either, for Crawfurd had done the same in his estimation of Burma's economic health and military capabilities. But what is interesting is *how* St. John dismissed the Malays of Brunei and Sarawak: As an immoral people who were so weak that they no longer posed an economic or military threat to British colonial interests. The Malays were, for him, a liability; and their passing was something he pined for. But the real threat to British power in Sarawak and the rest of Borneo came from another Asian race: the Chinese.

III.B. Spenser St. John's construction of the 'Chinese Peril'

> There will be a struggle ahead to face and there will rise a new peril, the yellow man.[85]
>
> René Pinon (1904)

That Southeast Asia had welcomed merchants and settlers from other parts of Asia – Chinese and also Indians, Arabs, Persians and others – was a well-known fact, documented by both local and foreign scholars for centuries. In the work of Theodore de Bry (1601) we see some of the earliest woodcut images of different Asian communities living alongside the people of the Javanese port-city of Banten, before that Javanese kingdom was sidelined by the Dutch who were envious of Banten's economic success.[86] But 17th-century Banten was a Southeast Asian polity, governed by a Southeast Asian monarch who could determine his kingdom's immigration policy on his own terms. The situation had changed radically by the 19th century for by then the British, Dutch, Spanish and French colonial powers had spread across the Archipelago, and it was the European powers who were deciding who was local and who was not, and who could come and who could not, to Southeast Asia.

85 Quoted in: Wei Tchen, John Kuo, Dylan Yeats. *Yellow Peril! An Archive of anti-Asian Fear.* London: Verso, 2014: 124.

86 See: De Bry, Johan Theodore and Johann Israel, *Icones Sive Expressae Et Artifitiosae Delineationes Quarundam Mapparum, Locorum Maritimorum, Insularum, Urbium, & Popularum: Quibus & Horundem Vitae, Naturae, Morum, Habituumque Descriptio Adiuncta est: Veluti Haec Omnia, In India Navigatione Versus Orientem Sucepta, diligenter Obseruata, Adeoque Tribus Hisce Indiae Orientalis Descriptae libris inserta funt.* Frankfurt, 1601.

Though he stated that 'my object is not to write a history of the Chinese', that is precisely what St. John proceeded to do in the two chapters that he devoted to the Chinese in Brunei and Sarawak.[87] Presenting them as strangers from an alien land, he noted that 'in the old days the Chinese were numerous', and recorded that the natives spoke 'of the whole country being filled with these immigrants'.[88] That the Chinese were numerous and that they were spread across Borneo was one of the first things he observed, for:

> The first thing that strikes an enquirer into the intercourse which was formerly carried on between China and the northern part of Borneo, is the prevalence of names referring to these strangers. They are called in Malay, Orang China; by the Land Dayaks of Sarawak, Orang Sina; and by the Borneans, Orang Kina, men of China; and north of the capital, we find Kina Benua, the Chinese land, in Labuan; Kina Balu, the Chinese widow, the name of the great mountain; Kina Batangan, the Chinese river, on the North-East coast; and we have Kina Taki, the name of the stream at the foot of Kina Balu and Kina Bangun, the name of a small river of the north Northeastern coast.[89]

Following the signing of the Anglo-Brunei Treaty in 1847, more and more Chinese from Singapore began coming to northern Borneo – to Brunei, Labuan and Sarawak in particular.[90] From the south there was also an influx of Chinese who were migrating to the British colony from Dutch territories like Sambas, despite the restrictions that had been put on their movement.[91] St. John was alarmed by the migration of Chinese into Sarawak, citing the case of Brunei that had been experienced the influx of Chinese and the worry that the Chinese would eventually rise up against the Sultan's government there:

87 St John, 1862: vol.2. 309.

88 St John, 1862: vol.2. 309, 310, 314.

89 St John, 1862: vol.2. 309.

90 St John, 1862: vol.2. 314.

91 St. John wrote that 'I will notice here a regulation that obtains in the Dutch territories of Sambas and the other border states, which is so illiberal that I can scarcely believe it to be authorized by any of the superior authorities, but must be the work of a very narrow-minded local official. No Chinese, whether man, woman, or child, can leave the Dutch territories without first paying a fine of 6 *l.*; so that as very few workmen can save that amount they are practically condemned to remain there all their lives, unless they can evade the blockade kept upon them, thus running the risk of the cat-o'-nine tails, a fine, and imprisonment. The reason for this regulation is that no Chinese in Borneo would willingly remain under Dutch rule who could possibly escape from it; and if liberty were given to them to leave the country, nearly every man would do it.' (St. John, 1862: vol.2. 330.)

> The Brunei government makes every effort to prevent the Chinese mixing with the aborigines, as it tends to destroy the monopoly of trade they seek to establish, and they fear also the teaching of the Chinese, who *would never counsel submission to oppressive rulers, though when employed by the nobles as agents, they can be more systematically grinding than the Malays*. (*Emphasis mine.*)[92]

Further Chinese migration posed a daunting prospect for St. John for it was clear that his impression of them was not a positive one. Though he did profess that 'it was quite a pleasure to look at the little Chinese maidens in their prim, neat dresses',[93] he believed that the Chinese who had settled in Borneo for too long had 'acquired an independence almost amounting to lawlessness'. Little Chinese girls may have seemed cute and comely to him, but older Chinese men were seen by him as cunning, cruel and unscrupulous; and the Chinese in Singapore in particular had 'been accustomed to treat the Malays there with great contumely'.[94] The British in Singapore had encouraged the immigration of Chinese (and other Asians) to develop the economy there, but St. John was clearly not persuaded by their profit-seeking arguments. He bemoaned the 'insolence of the Chinese'[95] and did not think much of their working habits either; and claimed that theirs 'was a very wasteful system of working gold',[96] while 'nearly all the early efforts to assist these immigrants in developing the agricultural resources of the country had but little success'.[97] Of the Chinese he met in the course of his data-gathering, he found them to be of the lowest classes and made up of 'insolent' labourers, menial workers and half-breeds,[98] and they were 'as usual, arrogant when there was no opposition, but cowards in circumstances of peril'.[99]

St. John was concerned about the prospect of more Chinese moving to Sarawak and settling in that colony that was under Brooke's rule, for 'after Sir James Brooke was established in Sarawak, they began to increase in numbers, though always inclined to be troublesome'.[100] More of them came to Sarawak

92 St John, 1862: vol.2. 316.
93 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 153.
94 St John, 1862: vol.2. 318-319.
95 St John, 1862: vol.2. 320.
96 St John, 1862: vol.2. 327.
97 St John, 1862: vol.2. 328.
98 St John, 1862: vol.2. 323.
99 St John, 1862: vol.2. 318.
100 St John, 1862: vol.2. 323.

in 1850, after they were kicked out of Sambas by the Dutch,[101] and 'the great influx of Chinese had now swelled to inconvenient dimensions'.[102] In time many of the Chinese in Sarawak would join their own secret societies such as the Santei Kiu *kongsi*, which also convinced St. John that trouble was brewing around the corner.[103] It was this deep fear and loathing for these 'Chinese strangers' that led him to the conclusion that they needed to be watched, and that they should not be given the protection of the British flag and British law:

> I know of no worse policy than to consider all those, whether British subjects or not, who leave our colony to settle on the coast as entitled to our protection. If we can be of service to them, it is as well to use our influence to insure them the best treatment, *but we should never let the Chinese imagine we intend to give them the protection of the British flag on all occasions*. [...] *And if we claim them as British subjects, which a few are in reality, their insolence to the natives is often unbearable*.[104] (*Emphasis mine*.)

St. John's fears would be penned in graphic detail in chapter thirteen of his work, where he recounted the circumstances of the Chinese insurrection in Sarawak and weaved his cautionary tale of what happens when Empire lets down its guard and exposes its vulnerabilities to the dreaded yellow peril. But such a complex attitude towards Chinese migrant labour was not unique. In 1813 Stamford Raffles sent to the island of Bangka a force of 1,600 Chinese workers to further develop tin-mining there, and by doing so increased the Chinese population by eighty percent.[105] (Raffles had no particular liking for the Chinese as a people, but he saw them as industrious – compared to the natives of Southeast Asia whom he had cast as 'lazy'.) The British and the Dutch regarded the Chinese as an effective workforce that could be used to exploit the lands they had conquered further; but at the same time were not about to grant them the liberties that they reserved for themselves. The Europeans viewed the Chinese as tools of Empire and colony-building (in the same way that the authorities of British Burma regarded the Indians who were brought to the colony useful in fields such as soldiering, policing, tax-farming, etc.) but also wanted to maintain total control over their tools and be assured that the tools would never turn against their masters.

101 St John, 1862: vol.2. 324.
102 St John, 1862: vol.2. 325.
103 St John, 1862: vol.2. 323.
104 St John, 1862: vol.2. 318.
105 Siew, 2018: 191.

In the writings of St. John and Low the 'Chinese question' was raised again and again by both of them – How could the Chinese be made to do what was needed, while not granting them equal status and not accepting them as British subjects; and how could they ensure that they would not later suffer from Chinese competition as they raced ahead setting up new colonies all over the Archipelago? (Hugh Low had argued that the native peoples of Sarawak could be persuaded to purchase locally made Chinaware – as in Sarawak there was found a great abundance of white clay of great purity – though he was concerned that such a project would probably fail 'on account of the higher price of labour in Sarawak and Singapore, to compete with the manufacture of China'.[106]) The Chinese (like the Indians) were regarded as the drones of Empire, but with the disdain that was shown to them also came fear: for the nightmare scenario everyone was worried about was the possibility that one day the drones might rise up. And in February 1857 that is precisely what they did.

The Chinese Revolt – sometimes referred to as the Chinese Rebellion, the Chinese Insurrection or the Chinese Uprising – of 1857 was clearly an event that shaped St. John's perception of all Chinese in Borneo by the time he wrote his *Life in the Forests* half a decade later. Though he was not in Sarawak at the time, St. John's account was written with the benefit of hindsight – as well as a British victory, now signed, sealed and delivered – and it is worthwhile to place the event in a wider context. St. John wrote his account of the Sarawak rebellion after an even bigger revolt had shaken the foundations of the British Empire: The Indian Rebellion of May 1857-November 1858. The Indian Revolt (dubbed 'Mutiny' by the British press) was a hugely important event that radically altered British attitudes towards their colonial subjects, and unsettled their hitherto unchecked belief that the 'martial races' of India could be relied upon to serve as their colonial troops in India and abroad. The trope of the 'treacherous Indian' would circulate back in England and by the time St. John prepared his *Life in the Forests* paranoia and anxiety about the future of Empire had grown.

The 'treacherous Chinese' in St. John's work would come in the form of Liu Shan Bang (1800-1857), who had migrated to Sambas from China around the year 1800. Liu had lived and worked in Dutch-controlled Sambas but later led a band of fellow Chinese workers to Sarawak as a result of Holland's restrictive control over Chinese workers in their territory. They eventually settled in Bau, where they continued their work as gold miners and had managed to prosper to the extent that their *kongsi* association – the *Twelve*

106 Low, 1848: 29.

Kongsi – grew rich enough to run the settlement of Bau Lama. It was their economic and political independence that led to stirrings of revolt according to St. John; and hostilities were opened on 18 February 1857 when Liu led a band of several hundred Chinese on an attack on Kuching.[107]

St. John's chapter on the Chinese uprising was meant to serve as a cautionary tale for his fellow Englishmen and women back home. As he stated at the beginning of the chapter:

> I shall endeavour to tell the story of the Chinese insurrection which suddenly broke out in the year 1857, as it appears to me fraught with instruction to us, and if carefully studied, may be of infinite service to those who have to govern colonies where the Chinese form a considerable portion of the population.[108]

St. John was utterly convinced that the Chinese in Sarawak were members of secret societies that had their branches and networks all across the Archipelago, from the Dutch East Indies to Sarawak to Singapore. He wrote of their clandestine activities, constant communication among themselves and the smuggling of opium that was said to be common among the Chinese *kongsis*.[109] The story that he told was a simple one; of how British generosity was rewarded with Asiatic treachery, and how the Chinese in particular would forever be on the lookout for any signs of weakness on the part of the colonial power. He stated that the catalyst for the revolt was the arrival of news that British forces had been checked at Canton, and that James Brooke was then the subject of criticism by a Commission of Enquiry.[110]

The attack on the capital Kuching was described in some detail, as 'the confusion which reigned throughout the rest of the town may be imagined, as startled by the shouts and yells of the Chinese the inhabitants rushed to the doors and windows, and beheld night turned to day by the bright flames that rose in three directions, where the extensive European houses were

107 St. John did note that not all the Chinese who took part in the uprising were fully aware of its objective: 'On the 18th of February, the chiefs of the gold company assembled about 600 of their workmen at Bau, and placing all the available weapons in their hands, marched them down to their chief landing-place at Tundong, where a squadron of their large cargo boats was assembled. It is generally reported that, until they actually began to descend the stream, none but the heads of the movement knew the object, the men having been informed that they were to attack a Dayak village in Sambas, where some of their countrymen had lately been killed'. (St. John, 1862: vol.2. 341-342.)

108 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 337.

109 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 337, 338, 339, 340.

110 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 339.

burning at the same time'.[111] St. John's imagery – the scenes of confusion and terror, and the sight of an English arcadia transplanted to the heady tropics set on fire by mobs of armed Chinese men – led the reader onward as the drama unfolded: 'It was at first very naturally thought that the Chinese contemplated a general massacre of the Europeans'.[112] As far as narratives of native revolt go, St. John's account of the rebellion in Kuching did not stray too far from the tried-and-tested theme of the world turned upside-down. Following the assault on Kuching the centre of British colonial power in Sarawak was topsy-turvy, and the Asiatics now ruled the roost:

> When morning broke in Kuching, there was a scene of the wildest confusion; the 600 rebels, joined by the vagabonds of the town, half stupefied with opium, were wandering about discharging their muskets loaded with ball cartridge in every direction.[113]

According to St. John's account of the affair the demands that were made by the Chinese soon after their (momentary) victory were as offensive as the attack itself:

> It must have been an offensive sight to the English and the Malays to witness the arrangement of the court-house: In the Rajah's seat sat the chief of the kungsi, supported on either side by the writers or secretaries; while the now apparently subdued sections took their places by the side benches. The Chinese chief issued his orders, which were that Mr. Helms and Mr. Ruppell should undertake to rule the foreign portion of the town, and that the Datu Bandhar should manage the Malays, while the kungsi as supreme rulers should superintend the whole, and govern the up country.[114]

Written as it was a decade after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, St. John's account of the attack on Kuching appealed to the sensitivities and sensibilities of his fellow Englishmen who would probably have read it as yet another nightmarish tale of white power usurped; that came complete with blood-curdling images of slaughter. To add to the gory details already provided, St. John noted that 'the head of Mr. Nicholas was shown as the proof'.[115]

111 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 346-347.
112 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 347.
113 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 348.
114 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 349.
115 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 349.

As his narrative developed, St. John repeated the trope of James Brooke as the white saviour whose return and presence alone would restore order. Reminding his readers that Brooke's skill with the pistol and sword was unmatched and that all those who stood before him would be 'flying in all directions'[116], Brooke's return to Kuching – on board the company's three-masted steamer *Sir James Brooke* – was presented with considerable dramatic flourish. The Chinese – whom St. John had derided as 'cowards in circumstances of peril'[117] – behaved in the manner he expected of them, shooting aimlessly before running helter-skelter in abject terror.[118]

The rest of the chapter followed the developments after Brooke's return, leading to the anti-*kongsi* campaign and the eventual capture and/or death of the leaders of the uprising including Liu Shan Bang himself. Typically, St. John's account of the events of 1857 ended on a happy note, with English power restored to Sarawak. In the dramatic account of the rebellion that he penned, each ethnic group was appointed its role and place: the Chinese population of Sarawak that 'amounted to above four thousand five hundred before they rose in insurrection' were cast as the villains of the story, though 'while seeking to overthrow the government, ruined themselves'.[119] The Malays and Dayaks on the other hand were seen as the helpless but loyal servants of the Brooke government, who rejoiced at the return of their English Rajah.[120] The English and other Europeans were cast as the victims of the dastardly Chinese, though at the end of it all they would be rescued by one of their own, namely the White Rajah Brooke himself.

In the two chapters that he devoted to the Chinese in Borneo, St. John had essentialized their identity in no uncertain terms. For him the rebellion of 1857 had brought to light the *true* character of the Chinese, for the event:

> [...] displayed every phase of Chinese character: arrogance, secrecy, combination, an utter incapability of looking to the consequences of events or actions, and a belief in their own power and courage, which every event belied.[121]

But perhaps the most revealing aspect of St. John's account of the Chinese in Sarawak is how he was deeply concerned about the need for further

116 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 344, 352.
117 St John, 1862: vol.2. 318.
118 St John, 1862: vol.2. 354.
119 St John, 1862: vol.2. 335.
120 St John, 1862: vol.2. 359.
121 St John, 1862: vol.2. 359.

data-gathering and continual surveillance of the Asiatic communities living under British colonial rule. Though he had claimed that he did not intend to dwell at length on the Chinese in Sarawak, his two chapters on them were the among the most detailed and informative. What he did in the two chapters was to map out the presence of the Chinese across the northern coast of Borneo, identifying precisely where they were concentrated and what they were up to. The colonial panopticon had extended its gaze, and had fixed upon the Chinese who could be found at Blimbing, Batang Parak on the Limbang river. Ginambur, Kinabalu, Kiau, Tawaran, Papar, Madalam river, Sambas, Siniawan, Pamangkat, Lundu, Kuching, Tundong, Bau, Si Jingkat and Santubong hill.[122] And having fixed upon the Chinese and located precisely where they could be found, St. John concluded that they ought to be watched all the time:

> I think that this insurrection shows that though *the Chinese require watching*, they are not in any way formidable as an enemy, and it proves how firmly the Sarawak government is rooted in the hearts of the people.[123] (*Emphasis mine.*)

The key to controlling the Chinese was to outlaw their *kongsi* associations, and that – along with the call for permanent surveillance and control over their migration – would be St. John's advice to the British authorities later. And to add further weight to his conclusion he would cite the example of the Dutch authorities next door who had done the same, and by doing so had also restored order to their colonial territories in Dutch-held Borneo.[124] The nightmare was over, the Chinese were defeated and their *kongsis* dismantled, and the White Rajah was back in power. In the telling of the story of Sarawak St. John was clearly enamoured by the figure of James Brooke, who was already well on the way to being elevated to the pantheon of Empire-builders, and who in his opinion embodied the best principles of Empire by virtue of being what he was: white, male and English. In contrast to the idealised image of Sarawak that he had painted stood Singapore, which St. John regarded as an example of colonial liberal-multiculturalism gone wrong, and where too much freedom had been afforded to the Chinese and other Asian migrants thanks to a colonial administration that sought to protect the rights of all. This, for him, was the mistake that had to be

122 St. John, 1862: vol.2. 312, 313, 315, 317, 321, 322, 324, 325, 326, 328, 331, 332, 334.
123 St John, 1862: vol.2. 359.
124 St John, 1862: vol.2. 360.

avoided at all costs, for English law and English rule were 'intended to meet the requirements of a highly civilized people like the English, and not a wild gathering from a hundred different countries, such as is to be found in Singapore'.[125] Britain's imperial story was clearly for St. John a *British* story, and in that story the native Other's role was to serve as props to the drama of Empire.

IV. *Bloodsuckers and Insurgents*: Knowing the Asian Other and the Maintenance of Colonial Rule

> The panoptic task was to eliminate ambivalence, to classify clearly.[126]
>
> David Lyon,
> *Liquid Surveillance* (2010)

> An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of fixity in the ideological construction of Otherness.
>
> Homi K. Bhabha,
> *The Other Question*

Nobody builds an empire without putting some thought into it, and in the case of Hugh Low and Spenser St. John quite a lot of thought had been invested by both men as they went along collecting data about the lands that had come under their rule. That Low and St. John's accounts of British intervention in Brunei and British rule in Sarawak were somewhat one-sided would be obvious to readers today. Theirs were narratives that were self-serving and which reinforced the columbarium of colonial knowledge upon which Empire was built; and it comes as no surprise to anyone that in their works we see both the foregrounding of the benefits of colonial rule and the creation of stereotypes of the native Other.

That both men were selective in their data-gathering is equally obvious, and Lockard (1978) was among the first to note that both 19th century and modern accounts of the Chinese 'Rebellion' of 1857 were tainted by Western ethnocentric and colonial bias, 'since European representatives of the imperialist imperative largely produced the documentary sources for the

125 St John, 1862: vol.2. 364.
126 Lyon, 2020: 327.

period'.[127] In his critical re-reading of the pivotal event, Lockard took issue not only with St. John's interpretation of events, but also contemporary scholars of Southeast Asian history who seem to have accepted St. John's description of the conflict uncritically;[128] and was among the first to raise the obvious question: How could the Brooke government claim to be a legitimate authority in the first place? For in his haste to paint the Chinese uprising in the most gruesome hue, St. John (like Hugh Low) had taken for granted the notion that James Brooke was the rightful lord and master of a corner of Southeast Asia that he had conquered with the aid of the Royal Navy, and that the 'White Rajah's' credentials were whiter-than-white.

The only way that these grand narratives could have been put together in a manner that was intelligible was by fixing the meaning of the signifiers employed. To that end the meaning of signifiers like 'English', 'Malay', 'Chinese' and 'native' were semantically arrested, via a host of (often repetitive) discursive devices and narrative strategies that framed the encounters between the coloniser and the colonised in a consistent and predictable manner. In the way that Low and St. John's data-gathering involved the precise locating and pin-pointing of where the Asian Others were, what they were doing, where they were going, etc. we can see a sustained attempt to frame and fix the Other for good, to give each native race a place and role in the colonial story, and to make sure that none of the actors would veer off the script.

The outcome of these data-gathering projects would be the creation of reductivist understandings of the Southeast Asian Other, and in the future such nuggets of data would be employed whenever deemed useful and appropriate. The trope of the conniving and treacherous Chinese would be brought back to life again not long after St. John's work saw the light of

127 Lockard, 1978: 85.

128 As Lockard noted: 'both nineteenth-century writers and modern historians invariably refer to this conflict as a 'rebellion', an 'insurrection', or a 'rising', implying that the violence was aimed at legitimate political authority. D.G.E. Hall's account, for example, accepts uncritically the conventional Brooke view of the conflict. This view sees the 'rebellion' as generated by a Chinese secret society which believed James Brooke's local position to be weakening because of concerted political attacks on him by opponents in England. This attack, which was based on his military suppression of sea-going Iban marauders, led to a commission of enquiry in 1854 and the feeling in Borneo that the Royal Navy may longer aid him in his endeavours. A further catalyst was Chinese excitement over British activities in Canton. Victor Purcell is even more generous to his sources. [...] He even quotes St. John, evidently with approval, that 'Thus terminated the most absurd and causeless rebellion that ever occurred, which displayed every phase of the Chinese character – arrogance, secrecy, combination...' (Lockard, 1978: 85.)

day: In August 1867 violent rioting flared in the port-city of Georgetown, Penang, shortly after the arrival of the new Lieutenant-Governor Archibald Edward Harbord Anson. The conflict was the result of growing rivalry between the Hokkien *Tua Pek Kong* secret society and the Cantonese *Ghee Hin* secret society. Allied to both these Chinese criminal associations were Malay-Muslim gangs known as the Red Flag and the White Flag, though the Commission of Enquiry that was set up later focused mostly on the underground activities of the Chinese groups. As in the case of what had happened in Kuching a decade earlier, the damage to Georgetown was extensive and the Europeans were forced to defend themselves with the help of the Sepoys who were available. Angry reports in the Western press later questioned the wisdom of leaving European civilians unguarded while in the company of so many Chinese and Malays, such as the one in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

> Colonel Anson has been singularly unfortunate in these riots occurring so early in his administration. Combined with the recent withdrawal of the European Artillery, and the detachment of Sepoys having gone to the Nicobars, it has left him in very powerless condition, of which state no doubt the Chinese have taken advantage, and *we are compelled to ask, was it wise of the authorities to allow the withdrawal of the European Artillery before being relieved, surrounded as we are with 40,000 or 50,000 Chinese and 20,000 or 30,000 Malays?* (*Emphasis mine*.)[129]

In the memoir that he would pen decades later, Lieutenant-Governor Anson would return to the event that traumatized him so and regale his readers with tales of grisly rituals and bloody murder conducted by the Chinese under his rule.[130] This was the nightmare that Low and St. John had warned about, and in the nightmare of Empire the horrors that could befall the colonial imaginary were necessarily represented by the nomadic, unregulated and unpoliced native Other, unmoored from attachments to time, place and vocation as decreed by the colonial order.

Such apprehension towards the Chinese in Britain's colonies was not unique to the British authorities. As Lohanda (2002) has shown in her work on Dutch-Chinese relations in colonial Java, Dutch attitudes towards Chinese migrants and settlers at the time were in fact very similar to those of the

129 'The Disturbances At Penang', in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 September 1867.
130 Anson, 1920: 278, 279-280, 281, 283-284.

British.[131] As the Dutch colonial government began to adopt the role of 'protector' of the Javanese people who they had themselves colonised, attitudes towards other non-Southeast Asians hardened as well. Restrictions were introduced in 1864, 1871 and 1883 that prevented Chinese from entering the colonial administrative system while confining them to forms of economic activity such as tax-farming.[132] Seen and cast as 'industrious' yet 'non-native', the Chinese (like the Indians and Arabs) were utilized by the Dutch to serve the ends of colonial-capitalism, but not made to feel part of colonial society, despite the increasingly large number of Chinese who were born there. In December 1857 the Dutch Minister of the Colony of East Indies, P. Mijer (1856-1858) referred to Chinese entrepreneurs in Java as the *bloedzuigers der Javanen* ('Bloodsuckers of the Javanese')[133] and called for limits to be imposed on their economic activities, ostensibly to 'protect' the local Javanese merchant community – while also giving Dutch entrepreneurs greater opportunities in the colony. Such rhetoric struck a resonant chord among the emerging class of native Javanese elites who would later lead the indigenous economic movement that materialised in

131 The presence of Chinese migrants and settlers in what would later become the Dutch East Indies goes back to the early 17th century. In 1619 the *Chineesche Raad* (Chinese Council) was established in Batavia with the election of the first *Kapitan Cina* (Chinese Headman) to represent the Chinese community living in and around the city. As far as their legal status in the country was concerned, the Dutch authorities regarded the Chinese as *gelijkgesteld met de Inlanders,* or as being equal to the natives; and from 1620 the Chinese were expected to pay the *hoofgeld der Chineezen*, or capitation tax. (Lohanda, 2002: 42.) By 1818 the Chinese in the East Indies were classified as *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, a legal classification that also applied to Indian and Arabs and which placed them on the same legal status as the local natives vis-à-vis the colonial state. The opening up of legalised opium dens proved to be a boon for many of the Chinese officials employed by the VOC, as it gave them ample opportunity to collect revenue and taxes from these institutions, right up to the heyday of the opium trade. (Lohanda, 2002: 41.) But the status of the Chinese in Java remained unclear as they were regarded as subjects of the government of China. (Lohanda, 2002: 79.)

132 In 1848 the Constitution of the Netherlands was altered to allow for greater control of its colonies abroad. Administrative reform in the East Indies meant more decentralisation accompanied by the streamlining of laws and regulations regarding tax-collection and revenue earnings. As Lohanda (2002) notes, 'this also led to the abolition of the revenue-farming system (which was a special concern of the Chinese) that applied firstly to the small farms and later to pawnshop and opium farms, to be replaced by government monopolies'. (Lohanda, 2002: 35.) In 1855 the first steps were made by the Dutch to end the practice of revenue and tax-farming. With the decline in tax farming the role of the Chinese tax farmers and other Chinese officials formerly in the pay of the colonial authorities came into question. 'Eventually, heated arguments and long debates focussed on the question of whether the institution of Chinese officers should be allowed to continue.' (Lohanda, 2002: 35.)

133 See: *'Sedert wanneer is het Gouvernement zoo anti-Chineesch geworden?'*, Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1857, part 1, pp. 168-171. (Quoted in Lohanda, 2002: 23, f. 3.)

the form of local organisations like the *Sarekat Dagang Islam*, which aimed to halt the advances of Chinese capital in the colony.[134]

V. And the Narrative Continues: The Fairy Tale Ending to Sarawak's Story

> The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked.
>
> Karl Marx,
> *The Future Results of British Rule in India* (1853)

That Sarawak's story could only have a fairy tale ending seems doubly obvious when we consider that the story was told in conjunction with other tales of Empire. For the story of benevolent imperial intervention to make sense it was necessary to have as its counterpart the story of native malevolence and decline as well; and readers of the works of Low and St. John will be able to see that both of them had woven a number of parallel narratives that developed in tandem with one another. At the forefront was of course the tale of the Brooke dynasty, whose messy and bloody genesis was cleaned up and sanitised. Parallel to this were three other narratives that framed the former in bold relief: the story of the decline of Malay power, embodied by the tale of Brunei's fall from grace; the story of Chinese treachery, encapsulated in the account of the Sarawak uprising; and the story of local native backwardness and vulnerability, that was found in the studies of native life and customs carried out by Low and St. John together. All three stories of the non-Western Other were the result of data-collection and fieldwork, and they remain examples of colonial knowledge-production where knowledge served the ends of empire-building as well. In the years that followed other writers – colonial administrators, bureaucrats, explorers and scholars – would add to the body of knowledge that Low and St. John had collected, and in time the

134 More than half a century later, the same description of the Chinese as 'bloodsuckers of the Javanese' would be taken up by Abdul Muis, one of the leaders of the *Sarekat Dagang Islam*. During his European tour Abdul Muis spoke of the Chinese as bloodsuckers who had drained the wealth of the nation and who had stood in the way of the economic advancement of the local Javanese. (Lohanda, 2002: 89-90.)

native Other would be studied, governed and rendered knowable even more in works such as Ling Roth's *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (1896).

The two men whose works were instrumental in the shaping how the colonial imaginary regarded Sarawak and North Borneo – Hugh Low and Spenser St. John – would themselves be rewarded and recognized as loyal servants of Empire: Hugh Low would eventually be transferred from Labuan to the Malay kingdom of Perak on the Malay Peninsula, where he would take up the post of colonial Resident in 1877.[135] For his services to the Empire he would be made a Knight of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG). Later in his career Spenser St. John would be made *chargé d'affaires* in Haiti (in 1863) and then the Dominican Republic (in 1871). He would remain a career diplomat and he would later serve as Minister in Haiti (in 1872) before moving on to Peru where he served until 1883. Following that he was made Envoy Extraordinary to Mexico from 1884 to 1893. Nourished on a diet of Orientalist constructions of the Other since childhood, the move to the West Indies and Latin America did little to mellow his temperament; and his opinion of the government of the Haitian Republic and Latin American states was as jaundiced as the views he held of Asians decades earlier.

The Sarawak that Low and St. John left behind would remain a curious addition to the British Empire. Ruled by a dynasty of 'White Rajahs' who seemed in every respect dissimilar to the natives they lorded over, the quasi-kingdom that James Brooke and his successors had built became the stuff of imperial propaganda, echoing the pseudo-scientific plotline of Edgar Rice Burroughs' (1875-1950) *Tarzan* (1912),where an Englishman could and would become the king of the jungle for no other reason than that he was an Englishman, and that is what Englishmen do while abroad.[136] Borneo as a whole would remain transfixed in the European imaginary as a place imbued with traces of the exotic, the dangerous and the peculiar; and in the decades to come would be associated with anything that did not conform to the recognized norm back home: Oscar Wilde would later be dubbed 'Mr.

135 In 1877 Low would be posted to the Kingdom of Perak where he would serve as the fourth British Resident at the court of Perak, shortly after the disturbances known as the Perak Revolt of 1874-1876. He established a state council that included both Europeans and Asians, and encouraged further cultivation and mining in Perak. This mode of governance was similar to the 'plural economy' model employed by the British in Burma, and was meant to maintain the hierarchy that ensured that the British would be able to manage and police the local economy, while also giving the native communities some say in the management of the state.

136 Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *Tarzan of the Apes*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg. 1912.

Wilde of Borneo' by his detractors.[137] After the pacification of Sarawak and the effective policing of its subjects came the droll and quaint narratives that were penned by the likes of Lady Margaret Brooke (1913) and Lady Sylvia Brooke (1923, 1970) that stirred the imagination of their fellow Englishmen and women with stories of head-hunters vanquished and happy natives thankful for their delivery.[138] Some of these tales ventured even further than where Low and St. John dared to tread, and Sylvia Brooke's novel *Toys* – that touched on the theme of inter-species transmigration of souls set in the tropical climes of Sarawak – remains a work of avant-garde fiction that is best left untouched by those who value their sanity.[139]

As the 19th century wore on it would be the kingdom of Brunei that suffered the most as a result of Brooke's gunboat adventure there.[140] By the end of the century Brunei was forced to eat humble pie, after having lost control of North Borneo as well as the territory of Limbang, and was never able to regain its former status as a Southeast Asian trading power.[141] Britain's fortunes had grown, and it was butter upon bacon for the British colonial administrations in Sarawak, Labuan and North Borneo. The peace that James Brooke had brought to Borneo was built upon the orchestrated decline of Brunei's economy. But this was also a peace that was gained through the collection of data and knowledge-production, culminating in the mapping of the whole of Sarawak and an accounting for all its inhabitants who would henceforth be framed and allocated a place within the hierarchical and compartmentalised system of racialized colonial-capitalism. In the fairy tale of Empire everyone – including the colonised native Other – had an appointed role to play, and everyone who was known also knew his place in the structured and policed order of power and knowledge.

137 Eleanor Fitzsimons, 'Oscar Wilde's Links to Blackface and Racism', in: *The Irish Times*, 26 July 2018.

138 Brooke, Lady Margaret. *My Life in Sarawak*. London: Methuen and co. 1913; Brooke, Lady Sylvia Leonora. *Queen of the Head-Hunters*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson. 1970.

139 Brooke, Lady Sylvia Leonora. *Toys*. London: John Murray. 1923.

140 Present-day historians have been more critical of Brooke's adventurism in Borneo. In the words of Hussainmiya: 'Once he had acquired a foothold in Sarawak, Brooke's ambitions knew no bounds. Like Sir Stamford Raffles of Singapore, (Brooke) was also a staunch supporter of British expansionism in Borneo. He urged Britain to establish a naval station, colony or protectorate on the coast of Borneo. [...] Brooke had two main objectives; firstly, to gain British recognition for his rule; secondly, to wipe out Brunei from the map of the earth. Although he did not receive official British blessings for his activities, he succeeded in obtaining the services of British naval chiefs such as Sir Thomas Cochrane and Captain (later Admiral) Rodney Mundy (who were visiting Singapore) in order to intimidate Brunei and force it to accept his gradual takeover of parts of the Bruneian Sultanate'. (Hussainmiya, 2006: 7.)

141 Hussainmiya, 2006: 22.

4. The Needle of Empire

The Mapping of the Malay in the works of Daly and Clifford

> Malaya, land of the pirate and the *amok*, your secrets have been well guarded, but the enemy has at last passed your gate, and soon the irresistible juggernaut of Progress will have penetrated to your remotest fastness, 'civilised' your people, and stamped them with the seal of a higher morality.
>
> Frank Swettenham,
> *Malay Sketches* (1895)

I. Elbow Room for Empire: Britain's Expansion into the Malay Kingdoms

> As the world 'filled up', influence by default was no longer an option. The British were pushed into formalizing their claims, and sometimes backing them up with displays of force. [...] The result was paradoxical. Although the British Empire became larger and larger, the diplomats and strategists charged with protecting it became more and more anxious.[1]
>
> John Darwin,
> *After Tamerlane*

The 1857 disturbances in Sarawak were in some ways a prelude to more violence. By the second half of the 19th century the race for Empire was on, and Southeast Asia would soon bear the brunt of renewed campaigns by the Western powers to expand their sphere of influence even further; and there would be new imperial actors on the scene that included Japan and the United States of America (Noor, 2018). Empire rested upon its global economy, and by the late 1870s Europe and the United States supplied three-quarters of the world's trade goods and consumed 77 percent of imports that were circulating worldwide.[2] Along with trade came the expansion of territory, and as Darwin (2008) has noted, by the last quarter of the 19th

1 Darwin, 2008: 323.
2 Darwin, 2008, 238.

century France's overseas empire 'grew by more than twelve times from 350,000 square miles to 4.6 million', while the French Empire's population grew to 50 million.[3]

Britain's colonial possessions in Southeast Asia in the mid-19th century were still relatively small, though destined to grow. Burma had yet to be defeated and conquered for good, while Britain's territories in the Malayan Peninsula were confined to Penang, Malacca and Singapore – later brought together as the Straits Settlements. Sarawak was under the rule of a quixotic Englishman who had declared himself Rajah. For British merchants operating in Penang and Singapore, the prospect of further intervention into Malay affairs was a promising one as it afforded them further opportunities for capital investment and profit-making, but that could only happen if the British government were to alter its stance towards the Malay rulers and find a pretext for direct intervention in the Malay states. What was needed, therefore, was another narrative to rationalise and justify colonial-capitalist expansion.

The problem with imperial expansion was that it was often messy, and native populations have the habit of resisting the colonial yoke imposed on them. Britain's entanglements in India had led to massive wars that incurred a high human cost, as did its wars in Burma. While the European merchants based in Penang and Singapore called for intervention into Malay affairs, the British authorities were already finding it difficult to maintain law and order in the few territories that were then under their control. Ten years after the Sarawak uprising there occurred another conflagration in Penang that threw a spanner in the works: the Georgetown Riots of August 1867.

1867 was an important year as far as the future development of British Malaya was concerned: in April of that year Singapore, which was formerly administered by the Anglo-Indian government based in Calcutta, was made a Crown Colony and that meant that henceforth it would be governed directly by the Colonial Office in London. Britain's power was growing, but it was also being challenged: earlier that year the Irish Republican Brotherhood declared open rebellion against the British government, sparking off the Fenian Uprising. In Asia a new power was about to emerge as well: the abdication of Shogun Tokugawa opened the way for the rise of Prince Mutsuhito, who would assume the title of Emperor Meiji and herald a new era of unprecedented reform and modernisation across Japan. British power had grown exponentially, but this also meant that the architects of Empire

3 Darwin, 2008: 328.

had to adjust to the new realities of the time in order to avoid the pitfalls of imperial overreach and cross-cultural miscommunication – as Reverend Thomas Baker (1832-1867) learned the hard way, when his gift of a comb to the Fijian chief of Navatusila was taken as an insult and the Methodist missionary from East Sussex ended up being cooked and eaten instead.[4] Things were about to get hot in Penang that year as well, and though no Europeans were roasted the political temperature in the colony was about to rise considerably.

The Penang Riots of 1867 took place mainly in the port-city of Georgetown, which was by then already a complex environment thanks to the influx of Malays from Northern Peninsula Malaya as well as Chinese, Indian and Arab migrants, and where intermarriage had become a norm among the various Asian communities.[5] Long before the riots occurred, the British authorities had already begun policing the different communities in Georgetown and in 1856 the *Police and Conservancy Act of 1856* had regulated street performances and public celebrations, and henceforth even popular street shows (such as *Boria* performances) required a police permit.[6] By the 1860s there were already Malay groups such as the White Flag and Red Flag societies as well as Chinese secret societies such as the Ghee Hin and Toh Peh Kong. Tensions rose as rival Malay-Indian gangs clashed during the celebration of *Muharram* in May that year.[7] As the different Malay and Chinese gangs fought out their turf wars across Georgetown, tension rose following a series of murders between June and July. The riots began on 3 August 1867, and when the fighting erupted the Malay White Flag gang was aligned with the Chinese Ghee Hin society while the Malay Red Flag gang was allied to the Toh Peh Kong secret society. The combined forces of the Ghee Hin and White Flag societies was around 28,000 men, while the Toh Peh Kong and Red Flag societies mustered around 7,500.[8] Rifles and muskets were smuggled into Georgetown by both sides, from Phuket,

4 Susu, Elimeleki. *The history of Methodist Theological education in Fiji until 1973*. Suva, Fiji: Pacific Theological College, 2009.

5 As Musa (2007) has noted, intermarriage across ethnic lines was common in the colonies where mass migration was encouraged by the Company authorities. In places like Penang this was commonplace particularly among the Asian elites: Kader Mydin Merican, the first *Kapitan Kling* leader of the Indian Muslims (1801-1834) was married to a Chinese woman, while Syed Alatas who was of Hadrami descent and leader of the Muslim Red Flag secret society was the son-in-law of Khoo Poh, who was himself the head of the Chinese secret society the Toh Peh Kong. (Musa, 2007: 40.)

6 Musa, 2007: 88-89.

7 Musa, 2007: 65-66.

8 Musa, 2007: 68.

Siam and Province Wellesley on the mainland. The fighting spread out of Georgetown, affecting other parts of Penang from Jelutong to Balik Pulau, and continued for ten days.

So upset was Lieutenant-Governor Anson by the riots that he suffered an anxiety attack, and the only remedy that worked for him was a dose of opium that was washed down with a shot of brandy.[9] Following the end of the riots the colonial authorities immediately clamped down on all the secret societies operating in Penang and Province Wellesley. In the same year the *Preservation of the Peace Ordinance of 1867* was issued and subsequently in 1869 the *Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance XIX of 1869* was issued. When dealing with the Malay gangs in particular, Musa (2007) notes that the colonial authorities preferred to allow local Malay and Arab Muslim community leaders to play their role, and encouraged them to actively discourage Muslims from joining such societies. Four Muslim leaders – Tuan Sheikh Omar Basheer, Tuan Haji Mohamad Sirat, Khatib Abdul Kadir and Khatib Mohamad Hanifah – would issue a string of *fatwas* (religious rulings) that stated that all such secret societies were *haram* (prohibited); and that those who had taken part in their arcane ceremonies (such as drinking blood oaths with alcohol) were apostates and thus excommunicated from the Muslim community.[10]

The significance of the Georgetown Riots lay in the fact that it demonstrated how different Asian communities could actually work together against the colonial authorities right under their very noses. For if there was one area where the natives could cooperate it was the criminal underworld. Musa's (2007) study of the Malay secret societies in the Northern states of the Malay Peninsula showed how Malays, Arabs and Indian Muslims were often recruited by Chinese gangs and secret societies in places like Penang – though to safeguard the interests of the Chinese societies this fact was often hidden from the colonial authorities and the gang members themselves.[11] The rationale for these cross-ethnic alliances was simple enough: for the Malays of the North who had been forced to leave their

9 In his biography *About Others and Myself*, Anson would later write: 'The anxiety, knocking about during the riots, and other worries in the heat of the climate, upset my health, and I placed myself in the hands of Doctor King, the medical officer of the Settlement, who was one of the Indian medical staff; and he ordered me to take one grain of opium twice a day. To this I demurred, telling him that I had taken opium in the Crimea, and that the effect had been very unpleasant. He said, "Never mind that, it is *the* medicine in this climate. If it makes you feel uncomfortable, take a little brandy and water, and that will set you right"'. (Anson, 1920: 284.)

10 Musa, 2007: 82-84.

11 Musa, 2007: 58.

native lands thanks to the imperial ambitions of Siam, migration to the British colonies became a necessity and once there they needed to attach themselves to whatever local organization or society that would offer them protection and work. Musa also notes that:

> The Malays were of paramount importance to the Chinese secret societies, in terms of dealing with the local police force which was (often) made up mainly of Malays and also in terms of carrying out jobs which the Chinese secret societies did not want to be involved in. In this sense, the Malays became a stepping stone for the Chinese. At the very least, through their Malay members, the Chinese secret societies could bribe the police so that the police would not keep a close watch on their activities.[12]

Later in 1882 *Ordinance IV of 1882* was issued, that specifically prevented non-Chinese colonial subjects from joining any Chinese society. As Musa (2007) has noted, 'henceforth non-Chinese found to be involved in Chinese secret societies would be fined 500 dollars, a huge sum at the time'.[13]

Colonial policing, colonial multiculturalism and the politics of divide-and-rule all came together in the context of 19th century colonial Penang then. The authorities in Penang had different concerns about the different communities that were now living under their rule: The Indians – some of whom were convicts and/or exiles – brought with them the recurring nightmare of the Indian Rebellion[14]; while the Chinese were deemed suspect thanks to their underground societies, their possible linkages to other criminal groups and the worry that they might be collaborating with the King of Ligor.[15]

12 Musa, 2007: 59.

13 Musa, 2007: 81.

14 Musa (2007) has noted that Penang would take up most of the Indian convicts that had earlier been sent to Bencoolen. Following the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, Indian prisoners who had previously been sent off to work in Bencoolen had to be relocated to Penang, which presented the Company officials of Penang with a new set of problems, for: 'the presence of convicts from India was only seen as a threat to the safety of the residents of the Straits Settlements when the rebels involved in the 1857 Indian Mutiny and other dangerous convicts who were serving their sentences in the Alipore jail were brought in. Although the number of convicts sent could never exceed four hundred, this was still considered large compared to the capacity of the prisons in the Straits Settlements to accommodate them'. (Musa, 2007: 49-50.)

15 Musa's (2007) work has unearthed the deep and long connections between the Siamese Vassal-Kingdom of Ligor and Chinese secret societies operating right under the noses of the East

But it was the Malays whom the British knew the least about, and the British authorities were largely clueless about the internal goings-on in the Malay-Muslim community, as Musa (2007) has pointed out:

> The British authorities paid very little attention to the Malay-Muslim community. As a result, administrative and legal matters as well as social activities, the welfare of the community and matters related to Islam were left completely to the heads of the Malay communities themselves. The British were extremely liberal with regard to Islamic affairs. [...] The lack of interest on the part of the British to be directly involved in the administration of the Malay community resulted in the formation of a certain kind of hierarchy in the administration of Islamic matters in places like Penang.[16]

This culture of 'benign neglect' meant that the development of Malay-Muslim politics in places like Penang would continue relatively unobserved and unregulated; and by the 1860s the British authorities were unaware of ground-level sentiments among the Muslims of their colonies. When the Penang Riots of 1867 broke out, the British authorities were caught unprepared for:

> The function of mosques had (by then) changed radically. From being places of worship, mosques became venues for meetings and the meeting places of the White Flag and Red Flag (secret societies). It was in these places that fighting strategies were planned and they provided temporary accommodation for the warring factions.[17]

India Company in places like Penang: 'It is clear that relations between the King of Ligor and the Chinese secret societies in Penang had existed since 1822 [...] The King of Ligor was of Chinese ancestry and his Prime Minister was also Chinese. His lineage stood him in good stead, for it facilitated the creation and the subsequent development of relations with the Chinese and their secret societies in Penang. The King of Ligor had long wanted to invade Penang, particularly because he was enraged by the stern refusal of the British to hand over the Sultan of Kedah in spite of numerous demands made by the Siamese. Low Achong (the leader of the Hai San secret society), meanwhile, made a secret pact with the King of Ligor so that he could be appointed the *'Kapitan'* in Perak. [...] To realize his dreams Achong gathered 200 or 300 Chinese from Penang to join the Chinese in Perak. Achong was promised by the King of Ligor that he would be made king of Kedah, Perlis, or any place he liked if he succeeded in seizing Penang. In line with this, Achong had to gather as many Chinese as possible to create chaos and disturbance at the time of the arrival of the Siamese in Penang. According to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, during that period around 1,500 Chinese were gathered for that purpose'. (Musa, 2007: 28-30.)

16 Musa, 2007: 41.

17 Musa, 2007: 79.

Though Britain had yet to intervene directly into the politics of the Malay kingdoms, their activities had had an impact on politics in the Malay world. The signing of the Burney Treaty between Britain and the Kingdom of Siam had an immediate impact on the fate of the Malays of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu. The Siamese invasion of Kedah that began on 21 November 1821 led to the near-devastation of the Malay kingdom. Tens of thousands of Kedah Malays fled the Siamese advance along with their leader Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, and moved to British-held Penang and Province Wellesley seeking refuge.[18] British attitudes towards the Malays of Kedah altered almost overnight: Prior to 1826 the officials of the East India Company had shown some sympathy to the deposed Sultan Ahmad and his followers, but after the treaty was signed the British washed their hands of the Malays and abandoned them to their fate.[19] Henceforth the British authorities in Penang would monitor the activities of the Sultan of Kedah and his followers, and attempt to prevent them from mounting a counter-offensive to reclaim their kingdom, for fear that it would antagonize the Siamese with whom they now had cordial diplomatic relations.[20]

By the 1870s the image of the Malays – like that of other native Southeast Asian peoples – had been framed by stereotypes that had been in circulation for more than a century. Calls for interference into Malay affairs were accompanied by the same tried and tested tropes and clichés, that included allegations of piracy, anarchy, native despotism and all manner of assorted evils that seemed to be the exclusive monopoly of the natives of the Peninsula. In July 1871 the seven-gun British warship HMS *Rinaldo* joined in the fray, performing a gunboat action by bombing the town of Selangor and later burning it to the ground, on the grounds that the Sultan of Selangor had reneged on his promises and was sheltering alleged pirates whom the British were hunting. News of the attack was sent back to London, and in the newspaper reports in England the Malays were once again cast as the lords of misrule, while calls for direct intervention grew louder.[21]

18 Musa, 2007: 13. Musa notes that in the wake of the Siamese invasion the population of Kedah dwindled to around 50,000. (Musa, 2007: 15.)

19 Musa, 2007: 17-18.

20 As Musa (2007) has noted: 'To fulfill their promise to the Siamese, measures were taken by the British to monitor closely the movements of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin in Province Wellesley. On 23 February 1829 the British issued a declaration forbidding any group or party from giving assistance to the Sultan of Kedah to attack the Siamese in Kedah'. (Musa, 2007: 18.)

21 The bombardment of Selangor was reported in *The Illustrated London News* on 2 September 1871. The report recounted how and why the HMS *Rinando* had attacked and destroyed the town of Selangor on the Selangor river: 'The cause of the Rinaldo's presence in the river of Salangore was the attack made on the day before on a small party of her men, under the command of

II. Stabbing at the Heart of the Malay: Seeking Justification for Britain's Expansion into the Malay States

> Damn it all, it's the first duty of a soldier – it's the first duty of all Englishmen – to be able to tell a good lie in answer to a charge.
>
> Ford Madox Ford,
> *Parade's End*

That the British commercial lobby in the Straits Settlements was calling for direct intervention then was hardly surprising, considering the onward march of other European powers across the region. In the Dutch East Indies, Dutch colonial power had expanded well beyond Java, and in Indochina France's grip had tightened. In May 1873 the Dutch fleet bombed the port-city of Aceh in Sumatra[22], and on 15 March 1874 the Second Franco-Vietnamese Treaty of Saigon was signed which handed to France control of three Cochinchinese provinces as well as access to the ports of the Red River.[23] Meanwhile across the South Pacific the pacification of New Zealand had been completed and the Maori Wars (also known as the New Zealand Wars) of 1845-1872 were over, marking an end to Maori resistance and the crushing inevitability of white rule in the land for good.[24] Advocates of the 'forward push' into the Malay states argued that with France and Holland gobbling up bits and pieces of Southeast Asia as they went it was unthinkable that Britain should be left behind. The kingdom of Perak would be the first Malay state that would experience direct British intervention into Malay affairs.

Lieutenant Maude, who were at the time escorting a Rajah to the boat for conveyance on board the colonial yacht Pluto, for the purpose of an enquiry into the alleged protection of escaped piratical murderers, contrary to the treaty between the Sultan of Salangore and the colonial government; and also on account of threats and menaces used by his people to the police officers sent to arrest the pirates'. Two days later the HMS *Rinaldo* returned, and 'landed a detachment of troops and bluejackets from the ship, under the cover of guns. They completely destroyed everything that remained from the bombardment, including all the guns and magazines'. [See: 'Bombardment of Salangore', in: *The Illustrated London News*, London, 2 September 1871: 217-218.]

22 See: 'The Dutch War in Sumatra', in: *The Illustrated London News*, London, 31 May 1873: 505.

23 The First Treaty of Saigon had been signed earlier in June 1862, and as a result of the treaty the Nguyen Emperor Tu Duc had been forced to give up the provinces of Bien Hoa, Dinh Tuong and Gia Dinh – which would later come under French rule as French Cochinchina.

24 See: Ryan, Tim and Parham, Bill. *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*. Wellington: Grantham House, 1986; Binney, Judith. *Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995.

The strategic importance of the Malay kingdom of Perak was obvious to anyone with a map. Perak – along with Selangor and Negeri Sembilan – were the states that were closest to the British possessions of Penang and Malacca, and along with Kedah and Johor they commanded the Western coastline of the Malay Peninsula, a factor that made them hugely important from the time of the East India Company up to the 1870s. But up to the last quarter of the 19th century the British were not yet inclined to interfere directly into the affairs of the Malay kingdoms – unlike the case of Burma, which had already suffered twice at the hands of the British during the First and Second Anglo-Burmese Wars of 1824-1826 and 1852-1853 and would soon be invaded again in 1885. The reports that were written about the Malay states were alarmist in nature, littered with warnings about civil conflict and native unrest. News of the civil war in Pahang presented a picture of the Malay lands as a hornets' nest: restless and dangerous when provoked.[25] It should also be noted that at this stage of Britain's early direct contact with the Malay kingdoms little was known about the lay of the land, and there had been no attempts – yet – to map the Malay states, leaving the colonial administrators in the Straits Settlements blind as to what to do and where to go.

And yet it was with such scant information that Andrew Clarke (1824-1902) – as the first Governor of the Straits Settlements (1873-1875) – introduced the Resident system whereby Britain would appoint Residents to the courts of the Malay states that would later come under their control. One of the

25 The Pahang Civil War began in 1857 and continued until 1863, though its roots go back to the internecine conflict that overcame Pahang from the very first decade of the 19th century following the demise of Bendahara Abdul Majid. Bendahara Abdul Majid was succeeded by his four sons, but as the line of succession remained unclear the path was left open for conflict between the four brothers. Following the deaths of Tun Abdul Mutalib and Tun Muhammad, power was eventually wrested by Tun Kuris. The conflict in Pahang was made worse by the eclipse of the Johor-Riau-Lingga kingdom, and the inability of the latter to step in and intervene directly into the affairs of Pahang. In 1819 the British under the command of Stamford Raffles intervened in the power struggle in Riau-Lingga to support Sultan Husain, whom they regarded as friendlier and who was willing to allow British commercial activity in Singapore. As the Johor-Riau-Lingga kingdom faltered, the chiefs of Pahang were engaged in constant subterfuge against each other. Pahang's Bendahara Ali began to make overtures to the British in order to gain their support against his rivals, but Bendahara Ali died in 1856, leaving the question of succession undecided. Following his death his two sons – Bendahara Wan Mutahir and Bendahara Wan Ahmad – fought over the right to rule Pahang in their father's name, thus beginning the Pahang Civil War. Pahang's political terrain would remain fluid and contested until Bendahara Ahmad secured the title of Sultan in 1888. [See: Aruna Gopinath, *Pahang 1880-1933: A Political History*. Malaysian Branch of the Royal Geographic Society, Monograph 18. Kuala Lumpur, 1996.]

first to be given that task was James Wheeler Woodford Birch (1826-1875), who was previously the Colonial Secretary based in Singapore. Birch's arrival in Perak came shortly after the signing of the Pangkor Agreement (on 20 January 1874) whereby Raja Abdullah would be recognized by the British as the legitimate Sultan of the kingdom, and his rival Raja Ismail would be granted a title and a pension instead. The Pangkor Treaty set the tone for the other treaties that would be signed with the Malay rulers in the future, whereby real political and economic power would pass into the hands of the British, while the Malay rulers would be left to decide on matters related to native customs and religion instead. This in fact turned Perak into a protectorate, but what irked the Malay nobles and chiefs the most was the article in the treaty that stated that they would no longer be able to collect tax revenues themselves, thereby weakening their economic and political power.

Birch's role as Resident was to impress upon the ruler and nobles of Perak that they were no longer the real power in the state. He may have done a decent job as colonial secretary in Singapore, but Birch was far from being a diplomat and certainly not an expert on Malay culture and protocol. He did not speak Malay, knew little about the manners and customs of the Malays, and was brusque in his dealings with them, including the Sultan himself.[26] Birch's promotion to the rank of colonial Resident was an instance of the Peter Principle at work, where the anosognosic pen-pusher soon found himself out of his depth.[27] His presence in Perak was a disaster waiting to happen, and sure enough disaster did pay him a visit while he was performing his morning toilet in the Perak River on 2 November 1875. What followed was a series of security operations that were intended to suppress what came to be called the Perak Revolt.[28] Yet again the British

26 In 1898 Frank Swettenham, the future Resident-General of the Federated Malay States (1896-1901), would pen his own account of the killing of J.W.W. Birch and the role he played at the outbreak of the Perak uprising. Swettenham's short story was published in *The World Wide Magazine*, and typically presented the Malays as bloodthirsty and prone to running amok. In the opening passages of the story Swettenham presented a rather negative view of Birch, who he claimed 'did not speak Malay, and knew very little about the country or the people. Worse still, he was constantly bothering the Sultan about business matters and the introduction of reforms'. (Swettenham, 1898: 11) [See: Swettenham, Frank Athelstane. 'Down the Perak River: A True Story'. In: *The World Wide Magazine*, London: George Newnes. Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1898: 11-16.]

27 Peter and Hull, 1969.

28 Upon receiving news that Birch had been killed the British reprisal was swift: On 6 November 1785, four days after Birch's death, a force was sent to defeat the Malays that was led by Captain William Innes who commanded sixty British troops along with sixty Sikh soldiers and fifty

press would go overboard with lashings of hyperbole and clichés aplenty in the articles they produced, some of which gave the mistaken impression that Britain was at war with the entire Malay race in the Peninsula.[29] Arguing the case for the annexation of Perak the newspaper *The Graphic* declared that 'the conflict in Perak seems to have originated in much the same way as most of our difficulties with dark-skinned semi-civilised tribes'.[30] That the British would ultimately prevail in the fighting was, for the *Graphic*, a foregone conclusion for 'brave as they may be they (the Malays) cannot stand against a force armed with rockets, and all the other appliances of modern warfare'.[31]

Ultimately the Malays of Perak would find themselves reduced to colonial subjects when 'their villages have been burnt, their crops devastated, and before long the survivors will find themselves compelled to submit to British rule, and their country overrun by a swarm of immigrant Chinese'.[32] But before the British could annex Perak completely, and transform its economy by encouraging further Chinese migration that would serve the ends of racialized colonial-capitalism, the colonial authorities needed to *know* the land and unearth the treasures that it contained. The British army was able to defeat the Malays with the use of rockets and superior rifles, but regular soldiers were not producers of topographical and geological information. What was needed was a man who would be able to learn more about the lands that the British desired to conquer, and for that a data-gatherer was needed.

Malay police officers, armed with guns and rockets. The battle took place at Sempang, and the *Graphic* reported that the Malays had declared a 'Jehad' (Jihad) and were 'fighting in their white *bajus*, the signal for a contest to the death'. [See: 'The War in the Malay Peninsula', in *The Graphic*, London, 20 November 1875: 509.]

29 The 'little war' in Perak was magnified and inflated by the British press in no uncertain terms. On 20 November 1875 *The Graphic* reported that the resistance mounted against the British was the result of growing religious fanaticism among the Malays, which was presented as a problem in Southeast Asia as a whole, for the Acehnese had also resisted the Dutch who were seen as infidels. The report noted that 'unfortunately there was a strong party which objected to order, which held that infidels were a great deal too much considered, and which had heard that in Acheen (Aceh) the faithful were warring the infidels fairly out. The defeated pretender to Perak, *Sultan Ismail, availed himself to this feeling, called on the fanatics as well as his personal partisans, and, it is suspected, arranged for a religious war*'. (*Emphasis mine*.) [See: 'The War in the Malay Peninsula', in *The Graphic*, London, 20 November 1875: 509.]

30 See: 'The War with the Malays', in: *The Graphic*, London, 18 March 1876: 267.

31 Ibid, p. 267.

32 Ibid, p. 267.

III. Enter the Imperial Needle: Dominick D. Daly, Geographic Intelligence, and Colonial Mapping

> (The Rajah) said of me, "If we let the needle in, the thread is sure to follow," meaning that, if an Englishman were allowed to enter their country, British annexation would be the natural consequence.[33]
>
> Dominick D. Daly,
> *Surveys and Explorations in the Native States of the Malayan Peninsula* (1882)

As stated earlier, the importance of the state of Perak would have been obvious to anyone who had a map, but the problem was that at that stage there were no accurate maps of Perak to be found anywhere. Precious little was known about the interior of the Malay states, and this posed a problem for Governor Clarke in particular as he 'could remember in 1873, when he was appointed the Governor of the Straits Settlements, going to Savile Row and asking the Curator of the Geographical Society whether he had any maps or any information he could give him with regard to the country to which he was going, and was sorry to say that, as far as he could ascertain, there was absolutely no such information of the least value in their archives'.[34]

Clarke was surprised that British intervention into Malay affairs had been so sluggish, despite the fact that decades had passed 'since the death of the illustrious Raffles'.[35] That the British commercial centres of Penang, Malacca and Singapore had thrived, and that there were more and more people settling in them, was for him ample 'justification for our settling in this rich, promising, and fertile land'.[36] With the Malay states so close, and their economies weakened thanks to Britain's tax-free trade policy in the Settlements, the time was right for the push into the Malay kingdoms. But in order to intervene in the political life of the Malays one had to know where they were in the first place, and for that one needed geographic intelligence. Geographic information was what Governor Clarke desired more than ever, and the man of the hour was D.D. Daly who did not dilly-dally with the task handed to him.

Dominick Daniel Daly (1843-1889) was the son of the Irishman Dominick Daly (1798-1868), Governor of Prince Edward Island and later South

33 Daly, 1882.a: 399.
34 Clarke, in *Proceedings*. 1882: 410.
35 Clarke, in *Proceedings*. 1882: 410.
36 Clarke, in *Proceedings*. 1882: 411.

Australia. He had taken part in several survey expeditions across Australia before moving on to the Malay states in the 1870s. It was Governor Andrew Clarke who gave him his first major project to undertake a survey of the Malay state of Selangor, which he did in 1875. Following that Daly moved on to Perak (in 1876-1877) and embarked on what was then the longest geographical survey of the state ever conducted, which led to the production of his maps of Perak later. Daly's work in the Malay states of Perak and Selangor from 1875 to 1877 was of crucial importance for that was precisely the time when British power was beginning to extend itself deeper into the Malay lands. Daly was working under the orders of his superiors which included Governor Clarke himself as well as British Residents like Bloomfield Douglas and W.F.D. Jervois, but that did not mean that he was a nonentity of no consequence. Daly's role as topographer was not a peripheral concern to the enterprise of Empire-building: On the contrary, he was at its vanguard.

It wasn't smooth sailing for Daly all the way, for by that time there were many Malay chiefs and nobles who were resentful of the growing British presence in their lands and who suspected that something was afoot with the topographer who pottered about surveying their hills and rivers; and he travelled about armed with his revolver close at hand.[37] In Johor he was given a frosty reception despite the humid climate, as some of the local Rajahs and chiefs were unwilling to allow him to map out the extent of their territories:

> The natives of these states were determined not to allow me to pass through their country. They fancied that there was some occult design in my mission beyond the mere, to them, unmeaning occupation of looking through the telescope and sketching in hills, rivers, villages and valleys. The Datoh (Datuk) of Moar (Muar), an influential Rajah in that part, said of me, "If we let the needle in, the thread is sure to follow," meaning that, if an Englishman were allowed to enter their country, British annexation would be the natural consequence.[38]

37 In his report to the Geographical Society Daly noted that while trying to travel further south into interior Johor he 'was suddenly surrounded by about 30 armed Malays, who took me prisoner and threatened my life. I refused to give up my revolver, and after a detention of some hours I was released. My Chinese servants were, however, detained and starved for two days and two nights, and they were sent back to me without any clothes'. (Daly, 1882.a: 399.)

38 Daly, 1882.a: 399.

The Datuk of Muar was right, and though Daly's esoteric preoccupations may not have had any element of the occult about them, they were distinctly shady and geared towards another end that he kept from the Malays whom he interacted with – which was to clear the path for subsequent British intervention that did indeed follow in his tracks. If Daly was the needle, then the colonial Residents, their administrations, their rules and laws would be the thread that came after him.

In the course of his work Daly also framed his opinion about the Malays whose lands were about to come under British rule. The Malays were, for him, 'essentially' easy-going, ambiguous and often misleading.[39] He was keenly aware of the gravity of the task that lay before him, and what his maps were intended for. In the report that he wrote and published in London later (in 1882) he avoided the sticky question of politics, and his own role in empire-building, but justified the work he did on the grounds – now familiar – that the Malay states had to be brought to heel due to the piracy, rapine and murder that was said to be taking place there:

> The question as to the policy of British interference in the internal government of these (Malay) States does not come within the scope of this paper; but it may be sufficient to state that *it was forced on the Government of the Straits Settlements in 1873-1874, in consequence of internecine wars that threatened the trade, peace and security of neighbouring British possessions of Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Province Wellesley.* Many of the victims of these disturbances were Malays and Chinese who were naturalised British subjects. *Piracy was rampant at sea; plunder, murder and rapine were triumphant on shore.* (*Emphasis mine.*)[40]

Daly was assisted by some of the Malays in Perak who took their orders from the ruler[41], but his singular complaint was that not all the Malays

39 Daly, 1882.a: 398.

40 Daly, 1882.a: 393.

41 Daly would later write that 'in Kedah and Perak I met with every civility and assistance in the prosecution of my surveys. The people of Kernei argued that, as they had not received any notice of my visit, they might be blamed for showing me about the country; that they would probably be heavily fined; and that, in non-payment of the fine, their wives and children would be seized as slaves. Here the baneful system of debt-slavery was in full operation, and many sad instances were brought before me. The only advice I could give the people of this distant state was to emigrate to Perak, Selangor, or Sungei Ujong (Sungai Ujong) –states under the British Protectorate – where debt-slavery was not recognised in the law courts'. (Daly, 1882.a: 406-407.)

were co-operative and willing to help him in his work, and that they did not appreciate that map-making was a serious scientific enterprise:

> It was most important to ascertain the position of their boundaries, some of which were conterminous with the British territory of Malacca. These boundaries were vaguely fixed by the Malays, where there were few definite points, and in reply to enquiries I received answers like these, "The boundary of our state extends as far as the meeting of the fresh water with the salt water of the river;" or, "If you wash your head before starting, it will not be dry before you reach the place;" or "The Boundary may be determined on the river, as far as the sound of a gunshot may be heard from this particular hill." The shot might be fired from a smooth-bore, or from a twelve-pounder; or a gale of wind might carry the report much further than was contemplated. These ambiguous phrases were calculated to mislead, but they are essentially Malay in their *laisser-aller* generality.[42]

The precision that went into Daly's work was not only a reflection of his skill as a topographer and map-maker, but also what was required by the colonial powers-that-be; for what the British needed was a thorough mapping of the Malay lands that showed where the most precious resources and commodities could be found, as well as the exact locations where Malay power was concentrated and where Malay resistance could be expected. To that end his maps were intended to provide crucial geographical-political intelligence as to where British power should be concentrated and where their military strength could be put to use, as when it was decided to move the British headquarters to Kuala Kangsar.[43] In the report that delivered later he made no bones about the fact that the Governor (W.F.D. Jervois) had instructed him to identify the 'strategic points, forts, and stockades in these disturbed countries':

42 Daly, 1882.a: 398.

43 Daly noted in his report that 'The Kinta river is one of the longest navigable tributaries of the Perak river, enabling the Chinese miners to export their tin to the seaboard, and to bring up their supplies and provisions. The river Kampar, one of its tributaries, traverses a large extent of chocolate-coloured soil in the Kampar district. The Perak river is the great artery of the country. [...] It was deemed advisable to move the headquarters to Kwala Kangsa (Kuala Kangsar), and I made a survey of the Perak river, by chaining along the banks from Kwala Kangsa to Durian Sabatang, comprising the ranges on either side of the Kinta valley, an area 45 miles in length and 25 miles in width was added to the map.' (Daly, 1882.a: 402-403.)

> Taking the order in which the topographical surveys of different states were conducted by me, Perak was the most extensive, as it was, in point of revenue, the most important province. The British troops were in the occupation of Kinta (valley), in 1876, when I was deputed by Sir. W.F.D. Jervois to fill in the large blank which represented Perak on the map. Hitherto the surveys had been carried on in accordance with the Governor's instructions, namely, to fix approximately and with as little delay as possible the position of rivers, hills, *strategic points, forts, and stockades in these disturbed countries*. (*Emphasis mine*.)[44]

The outcome of Daly's research were his maps of Perak and Selangor that clearly identified the borders of both states, as well as every river and stream, hill and mountain. The maps pointed out where the Malay settlements were, where cultivation and mining took place, where goods were sent to be traded and the routes and rivers that connected the communities in the hinterland. Of particular importance was his map of Northern Perak – the information for which he collected in the course of his survey in 1877 – where he mapped out the Bukit Naksa, Bukit Panjang, Bukit Tiga Pulo Tiga and Bukit Titiwangsa mountain ranges, and located every Malay village along the Perak, Muda and Krian rivers as well as the tributaries and streams that flowed from them.[45] Crucially, his map also identified the location of limestone, slate and quartz reefs, and in the detailed report that he submitted he identified precisely where the important mineral deposits in Perak were to be found.[46] (In his larger map of the Malay Peninsula he had also identified the spots in interior Pahang and Kelantan where gold was to be found in large quantities.[47]) In Perak and Selangor Daly noted that the highlands

44 Daly, 1882.a: 402.

45 Daly, Dominick Daniel. 'Map of the Northern Part of Perak'. In *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*. London: Savile Row. Vol. IV. No. 7. July 1882.c. Insert.

46 Daly noted that in the Malay states the currency of the Straits Settlements was not in use and not accepted for trading purposes, but in Perak, Selangor and Pahang the most common form of currency were tin and gold coins. Tin and gold were mined in Perak and Pahang, and he was certain that tin could be found in Northern Perak, for 'the appearance of granite on one side (of the spurs of the watershed on the Titiwangsa range) and slate with intersecting quartz veins on the other, would have at once tempted a party of diggers to prospect for gold in Australia; and it is probably that, by sinking a shaft as far as the junction of these strata, a metal of some kind might be uncovered. As tin is the chief product of the Malay Peninsula, and as the geological formations that shed either gold or tin are very similar, there is a likelihood that a tin deposit lies buried in this neighbourhood'. (Daly, 1882.a: 405.)

47 Daly, Dominick Daniel. 'Map of the Malay Peninsula'. In *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*. London: Savile Row. Vol. IV. No. 7. July 1882.b. Insert.

were still largely uninhabited, save by tribes of Orang Semang.[48] While his map of the Kinta Valley in Perak was particularly useful as it surveyed the topography of a district that was famous for deposits of tin, and which would later be exploited even further. His conclusion was that his survey and the maps he produced showed that:

> There is a vast extent – more than half – of the Malayan Peninsula still unexplored, of which we have only the position of the coast-line. Of the internal government, geography, mineral products, and geology of these regions we do not know anything; and as the circles of exploration of other countries are narrowing each year, it may be useful, to those whose taste for geographical research may be for "pleasant fields and pastures new," to know that, even in this nineteenth century, a country, rich in its resources, and important through its contiguity to our British possessions, is still a closed volume.[49]

Daly's maps of Perak and Selangor were published in 1882 and were well received. He had made it into the ranks of imperial map-makers; and at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London on 8 May 1882 Governor Andrew Clarke, who was also present, sang his praises and stated that Daly had managed to survey the Malay states of the Peninsula better than anyone before him. 'Having dealt so fully with the subject' Daly had demonstrated the potential benefits of further British intervention into that part of Southeast Asia whose importance to the empire was matched only by 'the general state of ignorance with regard to that which constituted the wealth and attractions of the country'.[50]

Clarke's support for Daly stemmed from his own concern about the future of the British Empire and the problem of unemployment in England at the time. And in his remarks he made it abundantly clear that the Malay lands were the most ideal destination for future British emigration – as the climate was perfect 'for Anglo-Saxons and other European races', and the Peninsula was 'one of the most promising to which young men with moderate capital could emigrate'. (Decades earlier the East India Company-man John Crawfurd had mooted the same idea, and as Knapman (2017) has noted 'he wanted widespread European migration into the Asian colonies'.[51])

48 Daly, 1882.a: 409.
49 Daly, 1882.a: 409.
50 Clarke, in *Proceedings*. 1882: 409.
51 Knapman, 2017: 131.

Clarke was particularly keen to open up the Malay lands to those young Englishmen who had 'constantly failed in their examinations for the various services to which they aspired' but were nevertheless not too stupid as to be disqualified from becoming imperialists abroad. Having an empire was a rather useful thing for countries that suffered a surplus of dummies, for it meant that even the dullest tools in the shed could still prove themselves useful overseas.[52]

The thought of British emigration to the Malay states was by then conceivable for the Malay states had been declared *safe*; though that safety was achieved through the disproportionate use of overwhelming military force and the extermination of all forms of local resistance. So safe was Perak by the end of the security operation against the local rebels that even traveller-tourists like the writer Isabella Bird were able to travel through the states of the Peninsula.[53]

Following the end of the Perak Revolt, disarming the natives would henceforth be a priority for the colonial authorities in Perak. With defeat came disarmament, and what followed in the Malay states was no different to developments in British India and Burma. The passing of the India Arms Act of 1878 effectively ended the practice of natives carrying weapons about their persons in British India – and the act

52 The transcript of the *Proceedings* noted that Sir Andrew Clarke went on to add: 'There would be no practical benefit in the future if the fact were not recognised that the great neglected Malay Peninsula was a province unequalled in the Tropics for its beneficial influence upon the European constitution. He (Clarke) knew of some families belonging to the Anglo-Saxon and other European races of the fourth, fifth, and sixth generation who were living well, and some who lived to a very great age. He regarded the Malay Peninsula as one of the most promising to which young men with moderate income could emigrate. There were many young men in this country who constantly failed in their examinations for the various services to which they aspired. Many of them had ample intellect, and most of them had good physical power and great energy, to whom this part of our empire opened one of the most successful fields for their energy and enterprise'. (Clarke, in *Proceedings*. 1882: 410.)

53 One of the first European female travellers who came to the Malay Peninsula was the travel writer Isabella Bird, whose journey to Southeast Asia came after her trip across North America. Her work *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (1883) echoed the sentiments of colonial officials like Governor Andrew Clarke when she claimed that Britain's involvement in, and eventual annexation of, the Malay states was inevitable and necessary, for 'it is probably destined to afford increasing employment to British capital and enterprise'. (Bird, 1883: viii.) But Bird was also convinced that 'the entente cordiale between any of the dark-skinned races and ourselves' was no more than skin-deep. Although she described the Malays as not being 'savages in the ordinary sense', she nonetheless regarded the 'coldness and aloofness about them' as one 'which chills one even when they are on friendly terms with Europeans'. (Bird, 1883: 140.) [See: Bird, Isabella. *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither*. London: John Murray, 1883.]

was also applied to British Burma later.[54] (Decades earlier the Dutch colonial government in the East Indies had likewise begun the process of disarming the natives, and in Java the ban on the conspicuous use of the Javanese *keris* dagger was introduced in the wake of the Java War of 1825-1830; while the British had banned the public use and wearing of the *keris* in the Straits Settlements in 1824.) But the India Arms Act did not simply eradicate the *visible* presence of weapons among the natives, for it was not enough to remove the sight of armed natives from the public domain; but it also empowered the colonial authorities – though the use of the local colonial police force and security personnel – to enter into the homes of the colonial subjects and to carry out searches for weapons that might be kept at home in the private domain as well. In the manner in which the Arms Act of 1878 specifically mentioned the need to have the natives *watched* and armed natives *identified* we can see similar concerns at work in Raffles' *Regulations* for the administration of Java that were passed in 1814. From Raffles' *Regulations* of 1814 to the Arms Act of 1878, knowing the native Other and knowing what they were doing, what they were keeping, what they were transporting and what they intended to do with the things they had in their possession was part and parcel of colonial governmentality.

Through his surveys and the maps he produced Daly had also contributed to the process of coming to know, and thereby frame, the native Other. His career ought to have taken off then, but that was not meant to be. After having completed his surveys, the British Resident in Selangor Bloomfield Douglas appointed him Superintendent of Public Works. But Daly's stint in Selangor came to an untimely end in late 1882 when he was accused of irregularities in the management of land. Later he would move to British North Borneo and there he managed to secure a job with the British North Borneo Chartered Company.[55]

54 Article 5 of Chapter 2 of the Arms Act of 1878 stated that 'No persons shall manufacture, convert or sell, or keep, offer or expose for sale, any arms, ammunition or military stores, except under a license and in the manner and to the extent permitted thereby'; while article 6 stated that 'No person shall bring or take by sea or by land any arms, ammunition or military stores except under a license and in the manner and to the extent permitted by such license'. [See: *An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to Arms, Ammunition and Military Stores*; also known as The Arms Act of 1878. India Act No. XI of 1878. (1 October 1878.)]

55 Daly would later serve as Assistant-Resident in the province of Dent in North Borneo, and between 1883 to 1887 he would undertake two exploring expeditions to map as much as the colony as he could for the benefit of the North Borneo Chartered Company. Declaring himself 'the first white man' to enter interior North Borneo, he wrote and presented his report to the Royal Geographical Society on 12 December 1887. (Published in January 1888.) Daly's depiction

Notwithstanding his eventual fall from grace Dominick Daly was in fact an important cog in Britain's imperial machine. That he conducted his work and produced his maps in just a few years' time – when there were no metalled roads or automotive transport in the interior of the Malay states – shows how speed was of the essence in the rush for Empire. It was vital for the imperial powers to maintain the advantage of speed over their non-Western competitors and adversaries, for as Darwin (2008) has noted: 'There was almost no time for native peoples to reorganise politically, redeploy socially, form wider alliances or develop more effective military tactics. This is why the rushes were so important'.[56] Herein lay the utility of maps such as those that Daly produced: They were documents that provided strategic information not only about the resources that were waiting to be dug up, but also about the routes and paths that could be taken to project power effectively, to outflank the enemy, cut off their retreat and penetrate their defences. Daly may not have been armed with one of the rockets that were used to blow up the Malay stockade at Sempang, but his maps had penetrated deeper into Perak, rendering it more exposed that ever before. He was not the first to map the Malay states and not the only one who saw the link between mapping and power: in the following decade another British explorer-administrator would likewise make his mark, puncturing even deeper into the Malay heartland while paving the way for further British intervention and the eventual creation of British Malaya: Hugh Clifford.

IV. *To Bring Darkness to Light*: Hugh Clifford, Colonial Geography, and the Duty of 'the Great British Race'

> Africa has been explored and re-explored during the last decade to such an extent that it no longer merits the name

of native life in North Borneo veered towards the exotic, and in his report he recounted his encounters with various 'wild tribes' such as the Tungaras (p. 5), the Makeealiga (p. 9) and the Dayaks of Sarawak. As opposed to his view of the Malays of the Malayan Peninsula – whom he regarded as hostile to British political interests – Daly's view of the people of Borneo was far less positive. The Muruts were, for him, 'savages, *pur et simple'* (p. 13), and their customs were described as 'bloodthirsty' and based on their 'state of ignorance'. (p. 13) [See: Daly, Dominick Daniel. 'Explorations in British North Borneo, 1883-1887'. In *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*. London: Savile Row. Vol. X. No. 1. January 1888.a; Frederic Durand and Richard Curtis. *Maps of Malaya and Borneo: Discovery, Statehood and Progress*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet. 2013: 169.]

56 Darwin, 2008: 256.

> of the Dark Continent; Central Asia, too, has been forced of late years to yield up many of its secrets to energetic explorers; and all over the world the hidden things of darkness are daily being brought to light by adventurous spirits, not a few of whom, we may be proud to remember, are members of the great British race.[57]
>
> Hugh Clifford,
> *A Journey Through the Malay States of Trengganu and Kelantan*

Empire never took a break, and it never gave a break to others either. Following the suppression of the Perak revolt, British power continued to expand across Southeast Asia, while the other European colonies were being built as well. In 1878 Brunei ceded control of North Borneo (Sabah) to Baron von Overbeck and Alfred Dent, and soon after (in 1881) the British North Borneo Chartered Company was established to govern the colony. In 1885 Burma was defeated at the Third Anglo-Burmese War and on 1 January 1886 the whole of Burma was brought into the dominion of the Anglo-Indian empire. Not to be outdone, the French were busy too and in 1887 Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia were brought together to form French Indochina, with its administrative capital first in Saigon (1887-1902) and later in Hanoi (1902-1945). In 1888 both Sarawak and North Borneo became British protectorates, and so was another Malay kingdom – Pahang – added to the list of British protectorates in the Malay Peninsula.

A key figure in the story of British colonialism in Pahang and the rest of the Malay Peninsula was Hugh Charles Clifford (1866-1941), who was deputed to take up the post of Resident there.[58] (John Pickersgill Rodget was the first Resident appointed to Pahang in October 1888.[59]) Clifford was born into a military family and in his childhood lived in the shadow of his father, Major-General Sir Henry Hugh Clifford who had been a decorated hero of the Boer War. Clifford the younger opted for life in the colonial service instead, and entered the ranks of the British Malayan colonial service. He served under the tutelage of his relative Sir Frederick Weld, who was then the Governor of the Straits Settlements. Clifford's arrival in Southeast Asia was timely, for by the last quarter of the 19th century an important change had also taken place in the workings of racialized

57 Clifford, 1897.a: 1.
58 Clifford, 1897.a: 3.
59 Gopinath, 1996: 103.

colonial-capitalism. The East India Company – along with all the other national mercantile companies of Western Europe – was long gone, and Britain's colonies in Asia were under the rule of the British government (or the Anglo-Indian government, as in the case of India). Colonial government required colonial governors and administrators, and this paved the way for a new kind of imperial hero: the colony-builder-administrator. It was then that men like Stamford Raffles (who was discredited at the end of his career) were being rehabilitated and celebrated, and it is not a coincidence to note as Siew (2018) has done that by the 1870s the Singapore College, Library and Museum were renamed after him (as Raffles Institution in 1868 and Raffles Library and Raffles Museum in 1874).[60] It was upon this new canvas – where heroic portraits were being painted larger than life – that another generation of colonial functionaries like Andrew Clarke and J.W.W. Birch were sent to the Malay states, eager to make their mark.

Clifford also wished to make his mark and in the year 1883 (at the age of 17) he was given his first posting in Perak as a cadet; his task was to learn the language, culture, history and social norms of the Malays whom he would later govern. Three years later, after being deemed experienced enough to handle himself in Malay circles, he was despatched to Pahang in order to map the territory and find a means by which the British would be able to gain a foothold in the kingdom. Clifford's task was straightforward enough: to enter Pahang on foot and to find the means to travel across the land with the support of his Malay guides from Perak, and then to find a way to insinuate himself into the court of Pahang. After that it was hoped that he would be able to find some reason to impress upon the Sultan of Pahang the necessity of opening formal relations with Britain and to accept a permanent Resident at the court who would represent Britain's interests in the kingdom.

The young Clifford managed both tasks, leading to his successful tour of Pahang and the production of the first comprehensive map of the kingdom – something that was of vital strategic interest to the British, who were keen to map the entire Peninsula for eventual colonisation. Later he also undertook several expeditions to the north and eventually produced the first detailed map of Trengganu and Lower Kelantan, which he submitted to the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1897.

Like Daly who had surveyed Selangor and Perak at a time of unrest, Clifford's fieldwork was done at a time when the state of Pahang was in the midst

60 Siew, 2018: 47.

of revolt. The Pahang Revolt of 1891-1895 was the immediate result of British intervention in the state, occasioned by the signing of the Pahang Treaty of 1888 that lead to the ruler Sultan Ahmad al-Mu'azzam losing much of his power and the kingdom being reduced to a protectorate.[61] Matters escalated with the killing of British members of the Pahang Exploration Company in April 1892 at Sungai Duri, where other Malay chiefs including Tok Gajah and the Panglima Muda were implicated. Unlike Daly who had steered himself away from trouble in Perak, Clifford – the son of a Major-General – did not hesitate to take up arms: in the security operation that followed it was he who led the British troops in the campaign against the Pahang nobles. The difference between Daly and Clifford lay not in their varying temperaments but in their subject-positions and the respective roles that they played in the framework of British colonial power in Asia: Daly was a topographer who was appointed by the colonial authority to carry out the task of mapping the Malay Peninsula, but Clifford *was* the colonial authority itself and he was empowered to act and decide as a colonial administrator and Resident.

Clifford's main preoccupation – in his mapping, his surveys, his fieldwork, his administrative tasks – was to secure British power over the Malay lands and to find means through which more and more of the Malay Peninsula could be brought under British control. He bemoaned the fact that Britain's forward push into the Malay states had been so slow, and the fact that British capital had yet to make its presence felt in places like Pahang. Following the signing of the Pahang Treaty in 1888 a state council

61 The Pahang uprising of 1891-1895 was the result of the new laws and regulations that were introduced to Pahang under British colonial rule. As Gopinath (1996) has noted, British rule in Pahang (as in Perak and Selangor) meant that the Malay chieftains of Pahang were no longer able to collect tax revenues for themselves. This led to dissatisfaction among many of the Malay chiefs who resented foreign interference in their affairs and who blamed Sultan Ahmad al-Mu'azzam for allowing the British to enter Pahang in the first place. The primary instigator of the revolt was the nobleman Orang Kaya Setia Perkasa Pahwalan of Semantan, popularly known as Dato Bahaman. Dato Bahaman refused to comply with the orders of the newly appointed Resident at the court of Pahang, and between 1888 to 1891 continued to defy the orders of the British. In 1891 he declared open revolt after his title was stripped from him by the Sultan, who was compelled to do so under pressure from the British. The uprising lasted almost five years, and in the course of it Dato Bahaman was supported by a number of Malay chiefs who likewise opposed the British. Sultan Ahmad did not appear enthusiastic about the effort to capture Dato Bahaman and his fellow rebels. (Gopinath, 1996: 141.) Throughout the Pahang Revolt, Sultan Ahmad refused to condemn the rebels to death and had negotiated to have Tok Gajah given the right of free passage to Pekan, and then abroad to Mecca. (p. 149.) [See: Aruna Gopinath, *Pahang 1880-1933: A Political History*. Malaysian Branch of the Royal Geographic Society, Monograph 18. Kuala Lumpur, 1996; Abdul Talib Haji Ahmad, *Sejarah Dato Bahaman, Orang Kaya Semantan*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Bahagia Press, 1959.]

was formed with Sultan Ahmad as its nominal figurehead; and present in the council were Pahang nobles like the Regent Tengku Mahmud, the Raja Muda, Dato Bandar, Dato Raja, Orang Kaya Chenor and the Orang Perang Indera Mahkota. But it was obvious to all that the real power in the council was the British Resident. The Pahang Treaty had compromised Pahang's sovereignty in no uncertain terms, as Sultan Ahmad was no longer allowed to engage in diplomatic relations with any other state without the consent of the British.[62]

As Sultan Ahmad's power waned, Clifford's authority grew. When he was made Resident of Pahang Clifford transferred his base of operations deeper inland to Kuala Lipis, while public works were stopped in Pekan itself.[63] In late 1888 – one year after Clifford arrived in Pahang –a British vessel was charted to go up the main rivers of the East coast of the Peninsula.[64] As soon as the Treaty of Pahang was signed the new Resident, a British Magistrate and a contingent of colonial policemen were sent to the royal capital Pekan as well. British capital poured into Pahang immediately after the state came under indirect colonial rule. One of the first British companies that was set up was the Pahang Corporation, founded by the tin prospector William Fraser; and not long after came other companies including the Pahang-Kabang Limited company and the Pahang-Semiliang Limited company.[65] The Pahang Corporation was given the right to prospect for tin in an area of 2,000 square miles in Pahang, in and around the district of Sungai Lembing. The corporation recruited the help of Chinese tin miners who then migrated to Pahang to carry out mining work in areas under the corporation's control.[66] Along with capital investment came security, and soon after mining operations had begun another police station and a magistrate's office were set up at Kuala Rumpun, where the Pahang Corporation was active.[67]

62 Article 6 of the Pahang Treaty stated that 'The Raja of Pahang undertakes on his part that he will not, without the knowledge and consent of Her Majesty's government negotiate any treaty or enter into any engagement with any foreign state', or 'interfere in the politics of administration of any native state'. [See: *Treaties and Other Papers connected with the Native states of the Malay Peninsula.* Singapore: Government Printing House. 1888: 42-55.]

63 Gopinath, 1996: 124.

64 Clifford, 1897.a: 3.

65 See: 'Mining Operations at Pahang, Malay Peninsula', in: *The Illustrated London News*. London, 5 April 1890: 419.

66 See: 'The Pahang Enterprise in the Malay Peninsula', in: *The Illustrated London News*. London, 29 March 1890: 398.

67 See: 'Mining Operations at Pahang, Malay Peninsula', in: *The Illustrated London News*. London, 5 April 1890: 418-419.

That the Malay states needed to be mapped so as to open them up to further Western capital penetration was something that Clifford believed in. In his reports and writings – Clifford would also dabble in fiction later in his career – he painted a picture of the Malay kingdoms as being in a state of *vita detestabilis*, where progress had not come a-knocking. The only Malay state that Clifford seemed to have any genuine regard for was the kingdom of Johor, which 'is now to all intents and purposes a civilized Native State' – though he did not fail to add that Johor 'owes its proximity to Singapore' and noted that its government 'has been closely modelled on European lines'.[68] The reason for the relative lack of development in the East coast states of Malaya, he argued, was the geography of the place – for the Malay hinterland was densely forested and 'the rivers are the highways of uncivilized Malaya'.[69] Trengganu and Kelantan were on the Eastern coast of the Peninsula and thus not along the direct route of merchant vessels that were sailing further to the East to China and Japan. Furthermore neither state had been opened up to Western capital penetration and thus did not have the economic means to develop their local economies in the same way that Perak, Selangor and Pahang had been developed by Western capital.[70] That Clifford placed so much faith in the transformative power of Western capital was hardly surprising for he also subscribed to notions of racial difference and believed that progress could only be delivered through the intervention of superior peoples, including 'the great British race', of which he was a paid-up member.

To that end Clifford undertook his survey of Northern Pahang, Trengganu and Lower Kelantan in 1888. Clifford was hardly an Indiana Jones who travelled light: His party consisted of forty Dayaks and eight Sikh policemen commanded by Superintendent R.W. Duff of the Pahang Police Force, the Residency's surgeon Dr. A.B. Jesser Coope, as well as 250 Pahang Malays who served as porters and boatmen.[71] Nor was his jaunt across the states one that would meet the approval of present-day environmentalists: Rather than spend time fishing out of the rivers Clifford simply ordered the use of dynamite to blow the fish and other assorted critters out of the water, presumably half-cooked thanks to his incendiary methods.[72] That an overwhelming majority of his party were Malays and Dayaks meant

68 Clifford, 1897.a: 2.
69 Clifford, 1897.a: 5.
70 Clifford, 1897.a: 2-3.
71 Clifford, 1897.a: 6.
72 Clifford, 1897.a: 7.

that there had to be a lot of rice taken along the journey, which presented the Europeans and Sikhs of the group with a serious problem of hunger.[73]

Clifford traversed 'all the country which is situated between the Trengganu and Kelantan rivers, and mapped out all the districts' through which he and his party had travelled.[74] Nature was his main adversary throughout the journey, as he noted that:

> The Malay Peninsula suffers from an excess of moisture which causes the soil to be quite inconveniently fertile, and presents a grave difficulty to those who mine for minerals at a depth of more than a couple of fathoms from the surface.[75]

In Trengganu Clifford found that there were few sizeable human habitations beyond the waterfalls of Kelemang, and that no European company had ventured to prospect for tin in the interior – though he was certain that vast deposits of tin and granite were to be found in the Kemaman district.[76] Clifford's report on Kelantan was not as thorough and detailed as the one he wrote on Trengganu, as a small number of Europeans had already attempted to explore the northern half of the state[77]; but he did provide further political and economic intelligence about Kelantan for the benefit of his English readers back home. The economic intelligence he gathered was based on the geographical survey he made along his journey. He noted that Kelantan had a much shorter coastline than Trengganu[78], but it had a deep hinterland that was accessible via the Kelantan river which 'was navigable to large Malay boats for nearly 200 miles of its course'.[79] The importance of the Kelantan and Galas rivers was due to the fact that it was the only way that anyone could gain access to the gold mining districts deep in the heart of the state. Clifford noted that gold could be found in abundance upriver, and in the course of his journey into the interior of the state he came across a number of settlements where Malay and Chinese gold miners were already at work washing for gold.[80] As in the case of his

73 Clifford, 1897.a: 7-8.
74 Clifford, 1897.a: 13.
75 Clifford, 1897.a: 5.
76 Clifford, 1897.a: 13-14.
77 Clifford, 1897.a: 32.
78 Clifford, 1897.a: 32.
79 Clifford, 1897.a: 32.
80 It is interesting to note that Clifford came across several communities of Chinese miners who were mining in Kelantan, and that 'a majority of them were natives of Kelantan who have

report in Trengganu, Clifford chose to highlight the riches of Kelantan but to also emphasise the fact that much more wealth could be generated if Western capital was allowed to penetrate the kingdom.[81]

It was not just the landscape of the Malay states that interested Clifford then: while he surveyed the land of Trengganu, he also studied the political system of the kingdom, and concluded that the state was then under a weak leader who possessed little charisma and personal authority.[82] Clifford regarded Trengganu as a polity hobbled by internal disputes and rivalry for power. By 1882 the state had been divided between the nobles of the land, leaving the young Sultan with control over the area from Kuala Temelong to the mouth of the Trengganu river.[83] The ruler he claimed 'remains for the most part unaware of the things which are done in his name',[84] and presided over a legal system that offered neither representation nor justice in Clifford's eyes.[85] As far as Kelantan was concerned, Clifford observed that its political system was similar to that of Trengganu's and Pahang's, the main difference being that the ruler of Kelantan was very much in the driving seat and in control of things. Clifford's view of the Kelantanese was every bit as negative as his view of the folk of Trengganu, and he noted that the state had had some rulers and ministers who were of a fanatical bent in the past.[86] Though the ruler of Kelantan was at the time secure on his throne, Clifford felt that the state was likewise caught in a morass of native despotism and arbitrary justice where 'barbarous punishments' were being meted out on a regular basis.[87] The Kelantanese, Clifford claimed, were a 'miserable people' who

never visited China'. The Chinese in Kelantan were led by their representative the Kapitan Cina, who in turn answered to the Sultan of Kelantan and whose duty it was to keep the Chinese in check and to collect revenues from them. (Clifford, 1897.a: 33.)

81 Clifford, 1897.a: 33-34.

82 Clifford noted that 'when the present Sultan (Sultan Zainal Abidin III) succeeded in 1881, being at the time a mere boy, his numerous relations had recognized that an opportunity, which they had long desired, had at length arrived. Under the iron will of his Great-Uncle Baginda Omar, and while his father Ahmad was still alive, the revenue of the state went to fill the royal coffers only, and the rajas and chiefs of the country were mainly dependent on the Sultan's bounty for their supplies. In Zenal-a-Bidin III, however, they found a weak, studious boy, afflicted with a slight impediment to his speech, which made him shy and nervous in their presence, and whose devotion to his religious studies and practices caused him to be easily influenced by his pastors and governors'. (Clifford, 1897.a: 14-15.)

83 Clifford, 1897.a: 15.

84 Clifford, 1897.a: 21.

85 Clifford, 1897.a: 21, 22, 23, 24-25.

86 Clifford, 1897.a: 37.

87 Clifford's disdain for the system of law in Kelantan matched that of his view of Trengganu. He noted that 'The law is administered on the same lines as those followed in Trengganu, but

had no rights of person or property, and so poor were they that they were selling their children 'for a few dollars a-piece'.[88] In the same way that Daly's survey was done for the benefit of his fellow Englishmen so were Clifford's findings documented and later presented before the Royal Geographical Society on 27 April 1896.[89] (By the time he presented his report on the Eastern states of the Malay Peninsula, British power in Malaya had been augmented further. In 1895 the protected states of Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang were brought together as the Federated Malay States.) His London report then included a long and detailed description of the political system in Trengganu, which he compared to that of Medieval Europe:

> In the reigns preceding that of Baginda Umar, a feudal system, *as complete in its way as any recorded in the history of the Middle Ages,* was in force in Trengganu. *This system, which presents a curious parallel to that of Medieval Europe*, is to be traced in the form of government of every Malay kingdom in the Peninsula with which I am acquainted. […] Under the Malay feudal system the country is divided into a number of districts, each of which is held in fief from the Sultan by a dato' or district chief. These districts are subdivided into minor *baronies*, each of which is held by a dato' muda, or chief of secondary importance, on a similar tenure from the district chief. The villages of which these subdistricts are composed are held in a like manner by the ka-tua-an, or headmen from the dato' muda. In the event of war, the Sultan calls upon the district chiefs to render the military service which they are bound to afford, and each chief summons the dato' muda, who call the village headmen, who bring with them the able-bodied raayat who dwell in their villages. (*Emphasis mine*.)[90]

Clifford had brought with him the vocabulary and epistemology of European politics, and it is interesting to note how he chose to – or perhaps could only – understand Malay political institutions through lenses that were

the barbarous punishment of mutilation of the hand for theft, and many of the other more cruel enactments of Hukum Shara are still enforced in Kelantan. The gob, or cage cells, in which criminals are confined, are exactly as those I have described in writing of Trengganu, but the cages more numerous, and the number of inmates is greater. The raayat here, as elsewhere in independent Malay states, has no rights of person or property, and he is only regarded by his rulers as a source of revenue. The people are miserably poor and the debt-slave system is here carried to a greater length than in Trengganu; Kelantan natives freely selling their children for a few dollars a-piece'. (Clifford, 1897.a: 36.)

88 Clifford, 1897.a: 36.

89 Clifford, 1897.a: 1.

90 Clifford, 1897.a: 16.

distinctly European. That he compared Malay politics to that of Medieval Europe, and assigned to Malay leaders tiles and roles – such as barons – reveals something about his own cultural perspectivism, as we shall discuss later in the concluding chapter. But it is also important to note that Clifford had outlined for his British readers the structure, form and function of Malay governance, and explained its workings in times of peace and war. Here the reader is reminded of how John Crawfurd's (1829) detailed study of Burmese society and politics also sought to explain the workings of the Burmese state, and how Burma's defences were organized.

The parallels with Crawfurd are not accidental, for it later becomes clear that Clifford also wanted to present an image of Trengganu and Kelantan as states in decline and whose people were subject to the 'evils attending this system'. In the same way that Crawfurd had presented Burma as a land subjected to the tyrannical whims of its ruling elite, Clifford likewise foregrounded the role of the ruling elite based in the capital of Trengganu, and noted how the process of centralizing power in the hands of the ruler meant that a coterie of capital-based nobles were now behaving like predators upon their own people:

> The relations of the raja, to whom one or more districts in the state have been granted as a source of income, are for the most part absentees, the work of collecting the revenue from their people being entrusted to agents. These men, who are usually natives of Kuala Trengganu, being practically unchecked, *tyrannize over the local headmen and the people of the out-districts,* secure in the knowledge that none dare raise a voice in complaint, and that no ill thing is likely to befall them provided that the district continues to be a steady source of income to the raja to whom it has been granted. The Budak Raja, or youths who form the entourage of the royal family, from whom these men are recruited, *are a class famous in all Malay states for their arrogance and overbearing conduct to the people*. […]The Budak Raja, however, looks upon the capital as his home, and sojourns to the out-districts as banishment. He is not of the blood of the people over whom he rules, he does not know their affairs, *despises their ways, is too arrogant to himself acquainted with their feelings or their thoughts, is utterly out of sympathy with them, and merely regards them as a potential source of revenue, missing no opportunity to enrich himself at their expense*. It is difficult to exaggerate the evils attending this system of absenteeism, and the consequent appointment of agents. (*Emphasis mine*.)[91]

91 Clifford, 1897.a: 17.

Here the themes of Asiatic despotism and native misrule are all present, though by then such ideas were hardly novel. The trope of 'native unrest' was by then a favourite among many European empire-builders. The Hungarian ethnographer Johannes Kubary, while working for German companies on his study tour of the Bismarck Archipelago in 1871, had argued that native conflict on the island of Malakal provided justification for German intervention there; while the Russian anthropologist Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay attempted to persuade the Dutch colonial authorities to expand their power further East to New Guinea in 1874 in order to introduce law and order in what he saw as a lawless land. Like John Crawfurd, who had attempted to drive a wedge between the ruling classes of Burma and the ordinary Burmese, Clifford too had framed the Malay ruling classes as a class apart, and placed most of the blame for Trengganu's relative weakness and poverty upon them.

Equally damaging was Clifford's account of the economic inefficiency that he claimed was commonplace in Trengganu at the time. For the benefit of British venture capitalists he waxed eloquent about the natural bounties of the state – listing rubber, camphor, rattan, wood, tin and gold as among the riches it had in store – but lamented that much of this commodity was wasted or squandered by the ruling classes who imposed various kinds of taxes – from the poll-tax to corvee labour – that invariably created monopolies and which channelled much of this revenue to their own pockets.[92] Those who could not pay their fines or debts to the nobles would find themselves thrown into the state's prison, which Clifford visited while he was in Trengganu and which he described as a 'lamentable spectacle'.[93] (Though he failed to note that up to the mid-19th century debtors' prisons were also to be found in London, and the harrowing accounts of life in such institutions had been documented at length in the works of writers like Dickens – but Clifford presumably did not carry a copy of *Bleak House* with him at the time.) That such monopolies were allowed to exist in a state where no system of representative justice could be found was, for Clifford, further proof of the decrepitude and 'Medieval' mores that he described in such vivid terms in his report.[94]

As far as British interests were concerned, Kelantan was doubly important to Clifford for its deep hinterland connected with the borders of Pahang and Perak – two states that were by then under British control – and that

92 Clifford, 1897.a: 18-19; 20-21.
93 Clifford, 1897.a: 24, 26.
94 Clifford, 1897.a: 22-23.

meant that Kelantan's geography posed a challenge to British security in the protectorates. To ram the point home Clifford spooked his English readers with the revelation that the interior of Kelantan had 'from time immemorial been the refuge of persons for whom trouble, war, oppression and their own misdeeds rendered Pahang an undesirable place of residence, and accordingly the whole of the population above the rapids, and a large majority of the inhabitants of the lower portion of the Lebir (river), are Pahang Malays'.[95] Clifford claimed that there were several settlements in interior Kelantan where the Malays of Pahang had settled by then, after the failed uprising against the British a few years earlier; and he estimated that they numbered around three thousand in all. That Kelantan could provide safe refuge for Malays who had rebelled against the British, and that these former rebels could be so close to Britain's latest acquisition in the Peninsula was an idea that Clifford deployed to alarming effect, giving the impression that their latest protectorate was still vulnerable and had to be protected further.

Like John Crawfurd who had written decades before him, Clifford's attitude towards the Malays and the Malay states was complex: his criticisms were directed almost exclusively at the Malay ruling classes, whom he regarded as effete and tyrannical. He certainly valued the land of the Malays and his geographical surveys were basically reports that provided economic intelligence about what kinds of natural resources could be found, and where to find them. He also had a positive view of Malay labour and industry, and did note that in the two states that had yet to come under British influence there existed a significant degree of Malay manufacturing. Trengganu, he noted, 'may be aptly described as the Birmingham of the Malay Peninsula', owing to the industry and ingenuity of the weavers in the kingdom who were famous for the production of *sarongs*, *kain limar* (shot-silk cloth) and *kain songket* (gold-threaded brocade).[96] He also praised the metalwork that was being produced in Trengganu, notably the brass and silverware[97]; and had equally positive things to say about the quality of woodwork and boat-building there.[98]

None of this, however, altered his negative opinion of the Malays and of the population of Trengganu in particular – whom he described as 'unequalled liars'. Of the mental capabilities of the Malays Clifford was disparaging,

95 Clifford, 1897.a: 34.
96 Clifford, 1897.a: 26-27.
97 Clifford, 1897.a: 28-29.
98 Clifford, 1897.a: 30.

for 'like all their race, their genius is imitative rather than creative'.[99] In this respect Clifford had not only set out to map the Malay lands but also the Malay mind, and of the Malay mind he had almost nothing good to say: 'A people so conservative as the Malays, who are so wedded to their ancient customs, whose chief standard of excellence is antiquity, who act by precedent, and who argue by quoting old laws and ancient sayings, are hardly to be expected now to produce anything'.[100]

Yet for all his disdain towards the Malays whom he regarded as being bereft of creative agency, Clifford's own work and the writings he produced betrayed no signs of originality either. In the manner that he regurgitated the same Orientalist stereotypes of the backward native Other who was in need of external intervention and Western guidance, Clifford's writing on the Malay states did not veer from the well-trodden path that had been cleared decades earlier by East India Company-men like Raffles and Crawfurd, and was in fact tiresomely predictable and boringly repetitive. Clifford's work was really the latest reiteration of stale and tired tropes, which can be traced back from Clifford to Daly, from Daly to St. John and Low, from St. John and Low to Raffles and Crawfurd. And his report on the Malay states of Kelantan and Trengganu read very much like a textbook example of an argument for colonial expansion and intervention – in very much the same way that Crawfurd had tried to rationalize British intervention in Burmese affairs and Raffles had tried to justify the British military occupation of Java. If the Malays were indeed 'wedded to ancient customs' as Clifford had maintained, then so was Clifford wedded to the customs of colonial-capitalism, empire-building and the Orientalist framing of the native Other.

The upshot of Clifford's report on Trengganu and Kelantan was plain enough to see: Both states possessed abundant resources that were waiting to be picked. But for Britain to gain entry into the two states there had to be some kind of moral-political-economic justification, and Clifford had simply dipped his hand into the basket of excuses for empire-building. The result was his 1897 London report that was on the one hand factually correct as far as geographical data was concerned, but also heavily laden with his own personal ethnocentric bias against the Malays who were cast as a backward and helpless people awaiting deliverance at the hands of a benevolent foreign power. That such a colonial power happened to be right next door in Pahang and Perak was

99 Clifford, 1897.a: 30.
100 Clifford, 1897.a: 30.

the cherry on the cake, and Clifford had sweetened his narrative with his accounts of natural wealth within arm's reach. All of this necessarily led him and his readers to the conclusion that intervention would be the best thing that the British could do for the Malays, for 'if well administered' both the states would become among 'the finest and riches states in the Peninsula'.[101]

Here was Clifford's mission in a nutshell: He had set out to map Trengganu and Kelantan and to acquire not only geographical information but also economic and political intelligence. In the course of his journey through the two kingdoms he had succeeded in doing what he set out to do. He mapped the interior of Kelantan and Trengganu, exposing them to the eye of the West and revealing the wealth that was ready to be tapped by Western capital. He had also provided a map of Malay political society and what he believed was the native psyche – which came in the form of now-familiar stereotypes of the disabled native Other. It was upon premises such as these that the White Man's Burden would later be conceived, and Clifford was by no means a minor player in the imperial drama that was being enacted. His sense of personal achievement was invariably bound up with the triumph of Empire and the defeat of the native Other. And his belief that the Malays were indeed defeated can be read off the pages of his official reports as well as the literary works he produced, such as his collection of tales of Malay life *In Court and Kampong* (1897.b) where he wrote that:

> One cannot but sympathise with the Malays, who are suddenly and violently translated from the point to which they had attained in the natural development of their race, and are (now) required to live up to the standards of a people who are six centuries in advance of them in national progress.[102]

Though later in his life he would surround himself with a personal mythology that he invented through his literary output – the stuff of *Boy's Own* fiction, full of vim and verve, pluck and daring – Clifford was not a boy scout. Though he lived and worked more than half a century after the passing of the likes of Raffles, Hugh Clifford was one of the strongest advocates for British expansionism in Southeast Asia, charging ahead at the vanguard of Empire.

101 Clifford, 1897.a: 37.
102 Clifford, 1897.b: 3.

V. The Geography of Empire: Mapping and Colonial Power

> The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested and even for a time decided in narrative.[103]
>
> Edward Said,
> *Culture and Imperialism*

Dominick Daly and Hugh Clifford were colonial data-gatherers and cartographers, and in the course of their service to Empire they produced maps. *But maps are never simply maps,* and the maps that Daly and Clifford produced were *Western* maps – the kind of maps that Richards (1993) notes 'could only be produced by Western agency'.[104] Both men were colonial cartographers, and in the course of their geographical surveys they not only mapped out the territories of other peoples but also the peoples themselves. Here lies the difference between colonial mapping and mapping in general: What can be read off the maps and reports by the likes of Daly and Clifford are not just information about hills and mountains, rivers and valleys, but also vital data about mineral deposits, native settlements and pathways to further intervention. In the course of their map-making they (particularly Clifford) also provided a running commentary about the state of politics and economics in the lands they surveyed, and by doing so provided intelligence about the Malay polities that would eventually come under British dominion.

The Eurocentric bias of the authors is clear in many instances: Clifford not only mapped out the territory of Pahang, but would later use it as the background for the works of semi-autobiographical fiction that he wrote. In the process of 'discovering' Pahang for Empire, Clifford would relegate it even further to the outer limit to Empire's episteme; describing the kingdom as 'a place which bore an evil reputation as a land where ill things were done with impunity, while the doer throve exceedingly."[105] And like the empire-builders who came before him Clifford could only see and understand the Malay world through lenses that were distinctly

103 Said, 1993: xiii.

104 Richards, 1993: 21.

105 Clifford, *The Death-March of Kulop Sumbing*, in: Clifford, Hugh. *In a Corner of Asia*, London: T. Fisher Unwin Press. 1899: 80.

Occidental – the fact that he found 'barons and baronies' scattered across the Malay political landscape points to his own subject-position as an Englishman out in the East, who had brought with him a dread of anarchy that was straight out of Hobbes and an appreciation for private capital ownership that came out of Locke.[106]

By the time that Daly and Clifford were trampling about the Malay bush, the power differentials between East and West had grown painfully obvious, and as Darwin (2008) has noted 'the knowledge gap between Europeans and others looked wider, not narrower, by the end of the (nineteenth) century'.[107] Though this gap – of knowledge, information and military technology – was the result of the Industrial Revolution and its new political economy in the West, men like Clifford were wont to see the difference between Westerners and Asians in *racialized* terms, and to present the Southeast Asian Other as someone imbued with essentialised traits (that were more often than not negative). This view of the Southeast Asian as inherently backward and unable to cope with Modernity and the march of progress was summed up in Clifford's novel *Saleh: A Prince of Malaya,* (1926) where the Malay prince – despite his formal education in England – is unable to adjust to the realities of life in a modern world upon his return to his native kingdom.[108] Having mapped out the lands of the Malays men like Daly and Clifford would also map out the inner recesses of the Malay mind, and from their writings would later emerge the Orientalist stereotype of the lazy native.

The cartographical surveys of Daly and Clifford were thus more than simple exercises of data-collecting and map-making. They were in fact the opening salvos to what would later become a sustained effort by the British Empire to penetrate deeper into the Malay Peninsula, to gain access to natural commodities and to regulate native society. By the 20th century this process would culminate in the creation of a string of Malay Protectorates where power was no longer in the hands of the native rulers but in the hands of colonial bureaucrats, administrators and judges, as well as Western capital. So pervasive and thorough was this process of penetration and pacification that by 1910 Cuthbert Woodville Harrison, writing in *The Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States*, would aver:

106 In this regard Clifford's Hobbesian fear of disorder was not unique, and as Knapman (2017) has noted can also be found in the writings of earlier colonisers like John Crawfurd who likewise believed that 'human nature was barbaric, and that there was no difference between the savage and the civilized.' (Knapman, 2017: 195-196.)

107 Darwin, 2008: 298.

108 Clifford, Hugh. *Saleh: A Prince of Malaya*, New York: Harper Press. 1926.

> To some temperaments it is a matter of regret, perhaps, that the dark places of the earth are being so rapidly lit up. Even Malaya, the land of the *Kris*, the piratical *prahu*, and the bloody and treacherous Malayan people has now become a quiet middle of the world.[109]

By then the narrative of 'colonial enlightenment' had almost been perfected, and it had become the standard go-to script for all manner of colonial adventurism, from Africa to Asia. In the case of Britain's expansion across the Malay Peninsula intervention came first, and was then followed by data-gathering and map-making; after which the natives had been rendered known and knowable, and thus ready for governance. All of this necessitated the fiction of the disabled native Other whose own knowledge was deemed inferior and never good enough, and for whom foreign colonial rule was meant to be beneficial. Daly, Clifford, and the men who supervised them like Sir Andrew Clarke, Bloomfield Douglas and W.F.D. Jervois, all belonged to that same circle of like-minded colonial functionaries who were utterly convinced of their own intelligence, and the righteousness of their deeds. And yet for all their talk of native ignorance and stupidity the only one who truly got it right was the Datuk of Muar who saw through them all – and who understood that the colonial cartographer was indeed the needle of Empire.

109 Harrison, 1910: 1-2.

5. The Panopticon in the Indies

Data-collecting and the Building of the Colonial State in Southeast Asia

> The question of the state is a question of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge; and the classing of knowledge must be underwritten and directed by the state in its various capacities; that all epistemology became and must remain state epistemology in an economy of controlled information.[1]
>
> Thomas Richards,
> *The Imperial Archive* (1993)

I. *We want to know you better*: Data-collecting in the service of Empire

From the late-19th to the mid-20th centuries, the European colonial powers continued to build their respective colonies in Southeast Asia for the sake of expanding the power of their respective countries and to address the growing demands of their own populations back home. Governor Sir Andrew Clarke's claim that the Malay Peninsula was the perfect place to send Britain's failures – a kind of second home for dullards – was in some ways correct, for it doesn't require that much intelligence to run the machinery of Empire – though building an Empire does. Empire-building was not solely related to questions of prestige and standing in the Western world, for as Pankaj Mishra (2017) – via Arendt – has argued, 'this debasing hierarchy of races was established (overseas) because the promise of equality and liberty at home (in Europe) required imperial expansion abroad in order to be even partially fulfilled. We tend to forget that imperialism, with its promise of land, food and raw materials, was widely seen in the late 19th century as crucial to national progress and prosperity. Racism was – and is – more than an ugly prejudice. It involved real attempts to solve, through exclusion and degradation, the problems of establishing political order, and pacifying the disaffected, in societies roiled by rapid

1 Richards, 1993: 74.

social and economic change'.[2] In the face of rapid socio-political change and growing public unease both at home and in the colonies, the need to know more about colonial society in order to manage and police it better was paramount.

The building of the all-seeing and all-knowing colonial apparatus has been the subject of this book, and in the previous chapters I have looked at the writings of colonial functionaries like Raffles, Crawfurd, St. John, Low, Daly, Clifford, as well as their supervisors and subordinates, who were the architects of this system of data-gathering, mapping and framing of the colonised Other. Their efforts did require intelligence, and the outcome was more (economic, political, strategic and military) intelligence that served the ends of empire-building.

In *The Imperial Archive* (1993) Thomas Richards talks about the great data rush that consumed the time and energy of thousands of colonial bureaucrats and researchers from the Victorian era onwards. Indeed this quest for information spanned a period of several decades and was not confined to colonial functionaries alone: equally strong was the desire to acquire and possess more and more scientific knowledge and data, as the Western powers raced ahead to prove just how far advanced they were and how far ahead of their peers they were too. By then the march of science and the march of Empire went in tandem, and as I have shown elsewhere in my reading of the works of the American natural scientist Albert S. Bickmore (1839-1914) (Noor, 2018), the men of science from the Western world were more interested in the advancement of scientific knowledge than the quotidian realities of life in the colonies, and like Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) were quite content to carry out their scientific surveys, mapping and data-collecting under the protective umbrella of colonial rule. Bickmore was happy to receive the assistance of the Dutch colonial authorities while he went looking for precious seashells in the Dutch East Indies, while Wallace was said to have amassed a vast collection of more than 110,000 insects, 7,500 shells, 8,050 birds and 410 assorted mammals and reptiles as he moseyed about the territories of Southeast Asia under British and Dutch colonial rule.[3] Neither of these men commented at length about the conditions of life of the colonized subjects in these territories – though they wrote quite a lot about seashells and orangutans.

2 Mishra, Pankaj. *How Colonial Violence came Home: The Ugly Truth of the First World War.* 10 November 2017.

3 Siew, 2018: 50.

At some point the paths of science and Empire converged and intertwined, creating opportunities for various forms of pseudo-scientific research to emerge. One of the best examples of this marriage of imperialism and pseudo-science was the racial census that was introduced by the various colonial powers in the parts of Southeast Asia that came under their control. Hirshman (1987) was the first to show how the colonial racial census – introduced in the parts of the Straits Settlements that were under British control in 1871 – effectively brought the various communities living in Penang, Singapore and Malacca together and grouped them into increasingly homogenous racial blocs over time.[4] (The racial census was first conducted in 1871, and then in 1891, 1911 and 1931.) The aim of the colonial racial census was to gain detailed information about the number of non-Western colonial subjects then living and working in the Straits Settlements (and later the Federated Malay States), and also to organize them into racial blocs that were summarily divided into the neat categories of 'Malay', 'Chinese', 'Indians' and 'Others'. That these categories were nominal and wholly invented by the census-makers themselves was clear in the manner in which they were perpetually shifting and changing, and how the definition of 'Malay' initially included Bugis, Dayaks, Jawipekans and 'Manilamen' (all of whom were distinct ethnic communities with cultures and languages of their own) but would eventually – by 1931 – embrace practically every other ethnic group in the colony as well as all other native groups from the Dutch East Indies. (See Appendix E.)

A classifying device like the colonial racial census, clumsy though it was, could only make sense in the context of a colony where the logic of racialized colonial-capitalism operated in a segregated society where divisions had to be maintained in order to legitimise and rationalise a racial hierarchy that kept the Europeans on top. Such exclusionary practice became the norm in colonial Southeast Asia where the native Other could only be seen and framed in inferior terms, and such praxes permeated all levels of colonial governance and spilled into the public domain as well, into realms like education, public policing and healthcare.

In her study of the relationship between colonial governmentality and the regime of colonial healthcare in British Malaya, Manderson (1990) has highlighted the fact that many of the health regulations and medical ordinances that were introduced in the colony reflected a Eurocentric view

4 Charles Hirshman, *'The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia'*. Journal of Asian Studies, 1987.

of Asians as being a diseased and dirty race.[5] Apart from the concern about the spread of diseases like malaria and beri-beri, Manderson also notes that there remained the belief that Asian settlements were always filthy and squalid, and the vector for all kinds of contagions. The belief that Asian climates were dangerous to Europeans lay in the theory of miasma and how environmental differences would impact on the health of Europeans who were unused to the climate.[6] Knowledge of Asian tropical diseases therefore went hand-in-hand with the colonisation of Asia, and as she notes the establishment of the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) in Kuala Lumpur in 1900 contributed to this body of colonial medical knowledge.[7] Winzeler (1990) and Manderson have argued that many of the health campaigns that were introduced then – against mental disorders, malaria, beri-beri and the gamut of regulations that controlled the running of brothels – were designed to ensure that the wellbeing of the European colonisers was not jeopardised by the climate of the colonies and the potentially infectious bodies of the colonised subjects.[8] Healthcare, sanitation, public cleanliness campaigns, etc. were thus all part and parcel of a broader attempt to impose total control over the colonies.

Colonising Southeast Asia meant having to *know* Southeast Asia, but that also meant that the thing that was known had to be objectified in a manner that rendered it not only exposed and knowable, but also static and passive enough to be studied safely and surely. The problem with this entire enterprise was that the thing-to-be-known, namely Southeast Asia, was not something that could be epistemically arrested, like a dead butterfly stuck on a pin under a magnifying glass. The fluidity and mobility of Southeast Asian society – with its long history of continuous migration, movement and settlement – meant that whole communities were often misunderstood, moved about from one analytical category to another, or sometimes summarily lumped into the vague category of 'Others' – an example being the somewhat elusive category of 'Jawi Peranakans' who were moved about from one category to another in the colonial racial census that the British carried out in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, who were sometimes seen as 'native' and at other times seen as being closer to Eurasians.

5 Manderson, Lenore. *Race, Colonial Mentality and Public Health in Early Twentieth Century Malaya.* 1990.

6 Manderson, 1990: 198, 201-202.

7 Ibid, p. 194.

8 Winzeler, 1990; Noor, 2015.

In some instances the reaction of the colonial authorities was to respond to such complexity and fluidity with even more surveillance and control, and it is not surprising to note that in British Burma, British Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina and the Spanish Philippines it was the policing and security arms of the colonial state apparatus that grew in time.

In the case of the Dutch East Indies the policing apparatus of the colonial state can be dated back to even before the British interregnum and the reforms that were put in place by Raffles (Carey, 1992) and the Java War of 1825-1830 (Carey, 1981) as well as the Padri War of 1821-1837 (Dobbin, 1983).[9] As a result of these conflicts the Dutch colonial authorities developed a fear of the 'itinerant Muslim' who was seen as a transmitter of subversive ideas. As the 19th century wore on, the colonial authorities in the Dutch East Indies expanded not only their colonial army – the *Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*; KNIL – but also the policing arm of the colonial administration, with attention given to intelligence-gathering and surveillance, and an emphasis on keeping an eye on both native communities as well as other non-Dutch foreigners in the colony. So effective was Dutch colonial intelligence that they not only monitored native dissenters but also managed to intercept and arrest other Western filibusters like the notorious American adventurer Walter Gibson (Noor, 2018).

Across the British Empire, the laws and regulations that governed the lives of millions of its subjects had been streamlined with the passing of the *Act to Remove Doubt as to the Validity of Colonial Laws* on 29 June 1869. In British Burma the colonial state's security apparatus was designed to keep the natives at bay, but as we have seen earlier this concern for security was

9 The Padri War was so-called thanks to the label that had been given to one of the groups engaged in the revolt against the traditional elite of Minangkabau and the Dutch, the Padri reform movement. For centuries Minangkabau society had held on to its matrilineal customs and traditions, and was known for its mercantile activities with the Minang diaspora spread out across Southeast Asia and beyond. But during the Napoleonic wars the Minang lands came under the control of the British who occupied the Dutch East Indies as Holland had sided with France in the war in Europe. During this period tensions arose among the Minangs who were partisan in their support for either the traditional elite or the new wave of Muslim reformers who were known as the Padris. The Padri War was fought between 1821 to 1837, and led to the signing of the Masang treaty with the Padris in 1824 which brought about a temporary cessation of hostilities. As a consequence of the Padri War, Dutch colonial attitudes towards Muslims in Sumatra began to change and there arose the new perceived threat of itinerant Muslim scholars from Arabia and India, as well as the fear of Indonesian Muslims travelling abroad for Islamic studies. [See: Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784-1847*. London: Curzon Press. 1983.]

– from the time of Crawfurd – tainted by subjective bias and the view that the ethnic Burmans were a people not to be trusted. Consequently the policing of British Burma bore all the traits of racialized colonial-capitalism at work, with notions of racial difference foregrounded in security calculations we well. As Hingkanonta (2013) has shown, during Sir Charles Crosthwaite's pacification campaign from 1887 to 1890 'troops were brought in from India to suppress the extreme disorder that occurred following the final annexation of 1885'.[10] Reliance on Indian troops would grow as 'British officials began to see their Burmese subjects as enemies rather than as law-abiding subjects' and 'the pacification phase was fought largely with alien troops – up to 16,000 soldiers were recruited from as far as the Punjab and Nepal to impose order on a hostile society. […] While the coercive aspects of policing were undertaken mostly by peripheral forces, largely composed of Indian and then the ethnic minorities, Burman civil police were left mostly with clerical work or petty guard duties.'[11]

In French Indochina (est. 1887) the role of the French colonial police was similar to that of their British counterparts in British India, British Burma and the Straits Settlements. France's *mission civilisatrice* was not without its obvious contradictions: notwithstanding the often-professed egalitarian ethos of the French republic, French power abroad was demonstrated in no uncertain terms, and the guillotine – once dubbed 'the revolutionary razor' made its appearance in the East Indies in the same way that it had been used to deadly effect in the West Indies decades earlier. Indochina was exploited to the hilt for the sake of serving France's imperial economy: from 1880 to 1900 the amount of land set aside for commercial agriculture quadrupled and the provinces were turned into gargantuan rubber plantations to serve the needs of French industry. Native education was given much less attention and by 1939 the colony had only one university with less than a thousand Indochinese students enrolled. In such a setting the French colonial policing system was developed to ensure that the colony would be kept stable for the sake of economic exploitation, and also to ensure that the boundary between the white colonists and the native Southeast Asians would be policed. The conduct of the French colonial police in Indochina was often brutal with excessive force being the norm[12], and their role was also to police

10 Hingkanonta, 2013: 9.

11 Hingkanonta, 2013: 48.

12 Blanchard has noted that in many of the French colonies the 'lack of personnel is sometimes put forward as an explanation to the disproportionate use of force by policing authorities: gunfire in this case is interpreted as a means of compensating the powerlessness of outnumbered police doing their best to keep the crowd at a distance. Much like its British counterpart (e.g.

the behaviour of colonists and natives alike to ensure that the racial barrier between the two communities would not be transgressed – though that was easier said than done due to the frequency of inter-racial liaisons between Europeans and Southeast Asians there.[13] (Tracol-Huynh 2010; Blanchard 2014)

As Europe entered the *Belle Époque* and celebrated its achievements, life in the colonies of Southeast Asia was not as pleasant as some might have thought. The race for knowledge and data-gathering led to growing interest in pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference and the introduction of more racial typologies, and as Anderson and Roque (2018) have noted Southeast Asia would come to serve as the 'imagined laboratory' where these modalities of information-gathering and colonial state policing would be put to work.[14] The colonial racial census in British Malaya was not the only instance of colonial 'scientific' surveillance in the region (Hirshman, 1986, 1987; Manickam, 2015, Sysling, 2016), and would be used in the other European colonies of the region as well from British Burma to the Dutch East Indies to the Spanish, and later American-controlled, Philippines. Southeast Asians were drawn and photographed, had their height and weight measured, and were slotted into neat categories that fitted according to the racial typology that was used to frame, locate and know them. The end result of these surveys, censuses and social mapping was the creation of racialized spaces where racial hierarchies would be maintained, and where as Stoler (1989, 1992, 2002), Kramer (2006.a, 2006.b) and Anderson (2006) have noted the respectability of Empire could be upheld while keeping the native Other in check. With Victorian-era science came Victorian-era morality as well, and so pervasive were the modes of enquiry and documentation that even the most intimate aspects of native bodies would come under scrutiny.[15]

with the 1919 Amritsar massacre), the French empire was marked by the permanence of this logic consisting of slaughtering protesting crowds of colonised people, as evidenced by the now well-documented case of the December 1952 repression of the Casablanca riot'. (Blanchard, 2014: 1846.)

13 Blanchard (2014) has noted that across Indochina 'where marriages between colonisers and colonised were more frequent than in North Africa, and mixed-blood children more numerous, indigenous concubines of Europeans were even considered prostitutes'. (Blanchard, 2014: 1848.)

14 Anderson, Warwick and Ricardo Roque, *Imagined Laboratories: Colonial and National Racialisations in Island Southeast Asia.* October 2018: 358.

15 By the 1870s colonial law in British Burma and the Straits Settlements displayed a conservative attitude towards human sexual relations, and introduced laws against certain forms of sexual conduct. The Indian Penal Code of 1833 was initially drafted under the direction of Thomas Macaulay and was adopted for use throughout British India in 1860. Included in the code was Section 377, which listed a number of 'unnatural offences' that could be committed against the human body, and this included sodomy; though this category of offence was taken from the 1826

Despite the growing evidence that the peoples of Southeast Asia – as with the rest of Asia and Africa – were not all that keen to live out their lives as colonial subjects with less political rights than their colonial masters, the march of Empire and knowledge-gathering continued. The men of science and the builders of Empire concurred with the view that imperialism was a benefit to all, and such blinkered confidence was reflected in the mindset of the rulers of Europe too. Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was reported to have said that 'we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist' in 1899.[16] In the same year that the Empress of India denied the possibility of defeat the colonial commissioner and advocate for the scramble for Africa Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston (1858-1927) published his work *The History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races* (1899), wherein he included a map of Africa where the entire continent was divided into four different zones; where the northern coast and southern tip of Africa were labelled as 'Healthy, colonisable Africa, where European races may be expected to become in time the prevailing type, where European states may be formed'; and the central parts of Africa dubbed as 'Unhealthy but exploitable Africa' and 'Extremely unhealthy Africa' in turn.[17] Johnston's map and the book he wrote bore the hallmarks of the kind of knowledge-based scientific imperialism that by the end of the 19th century had become the dominant discourse among the powers-that-be in Western Europe and North America; laced as it was with factual data, tons of statistics, detailed maps and a heavy sprinkling of scientific racism. Johnston would be made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB), honoured by the Royal Geographical Society and conferred an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University – but even that could not prevent the fact that the colonies which he helped to plan and build were beginning to fray at the seams, and that across much of Asia and Africa local voices of dissent were growing louder. Native dissent did not however resonate as loudly in the corridors of power in the West as it was then deemed unreasonable by those who thought they knew better. Just how this echo chamber was built, and how the logic of scientific data-based imperialism made sense to those who were its builders, will be the topic we shall turn to next.

Offences Against the Person Act of Britain. (The offence was in fact derived from an act passed in 1533 during the reign of King Henry VIII.)

16 Queen Victoria, in a statement to Balfour at Windsor Palace, recorded in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *The Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury.* London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1921. Vol. 3: 191.

17 Johnston, Harry Hamilton, Sir. *The History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1899.

II. Text and Context: Empire's Power Differentials and the Framing of the Colonized Other

> We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are.[18]
>
> Anaïs Nin,
> *Seduction Of The Minotaur* (1961)

> Colonialism is first of all a matter of consciousness.[19]
>
> Ashis Nandy,
> *The Intimate Enemy:*
> *Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (1983)

In *The Conquest of America* (1984) Tzvetan Todorov pointed out that 'nomination is equivalent to taking possession', reminding us of the arresting power of language and the epistemic violence that comes with knowing and naming the world around us.[20] Though I agree with the spirit of Todorov's assertion I would also argue that the claim that all knowing/knowledge is colonial/colonising can sometimes been stretched a tad too far, for if *all* knowledge is colonising in nature then *everything* has been colonised; and as a result colonialism no longer has a specific place where it can be identified and located clearly. In this book I have looked at instances of knowledge-building and data-gathering that were clearly aligned with a colonial agenda, undertaken by men who were themselves committed to the enterprise of Empire. This in turn opens the way for a discussion of agency and responsibility, and the related question of how we can and should read the works that were produced by men like Raffles, Crawfurd, Low, St. John, Daly and Clifford. When re-reading these works today we ought to place them in their historical context, and that context was the age of Empire. It would be impossible for us to discuss the age of Empire without taking into account the very real differentials of power that, by the end of the 19th century, were so painfully obvious to the natives of Southeast Asia who felt that they had lost the race for progress and modernity, and whose anxieties were later recorded by the likes of Munshi Abdullah Abdul Kadir (1796-1854) as he watched the world of the Malay archipelago carved up by the Western powers. (Abdullah, 1838, 1849)

18 Nin, 1961: 124.

19 Nandy, 1983: 63.

20 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, New York: Harpers Collins. 1984:27.

My argument has been that racialized colonial-capitalism in 19th century Southeast Asia was a data-intensive and data-reliant enterprise, and that through the data that was gathered the natives of Southeast Asia were framed as the constitutive Other to white colonial agency as well. But we do not encounter data or information as readily-constituted things in themselves. Data and information, as Cohn (1996) has shown, are things that need to be selected, identified as worthy/relevant and deemed as such via modalities of information-gathering and data-acquisition that are regimented. Cohn's emphasis on the workings of these modalities of knowledge-gathering reminds us that there is *always* human agency at work, and *we never accidentally stumble upon bits of data* lying on the pavement as Goffman (1974) has noted. Schama (1991) has further argued, 'even in the most austere scholarly report from the archives, the inventive faculty – selecting, pruning, editing, commenting, interpreting, delivering judgements – is in full play'.[21] For something to be deemed as *information* it has to be seen and appraised as such, and that necessarily points to the workings of a human mind that makes that judgement. Colonialism's information order, as Bayly has argued, was 'not separate from the world of power or economic exploitation, but stands both prior to it and dependent on it'.[22] In the East India Company's 'empire of opinion' the colonial subjects were invited, compelled or coerced to aid the process of data-gathering 'by the reputation or scientific and cultural superiority of their conquerors'.[23] Here is where the power, authority and agency of men like Raffles, Crawfurd, et al. come in, and it is their role in this process of colonial data-collecting that I wish to address now.

When Raffles formulated his *Regulations of 1814* for the better governance of Java, he was laying the foundation for a data-collecting system that foregrounded his own concerns as a colonial governor and the overlord of the island under his command. Raffles was not interested in the favourite colour of the Javanese subjects he governed, or their favourite dish or their favourite song. But he was certainly interested in where they stayed, the agricultural products they produced, how many members of their families were of working age, and what their collective output as producers could be. It was *socio-economic intelligence* that he sought, as well as a means to maintain control over a population that would be put to work for the sake of developing the colonial economy of Java. To that end his *Regulations of*

21 Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties* (*Unwarranted Speculations*), London: Granta Books, 1991: 322.
22 Bayly, 1996: 4-5.
23 Bayly, 1996: 365.

1814 had all the trappings of a sophisticated surveillance system that would be able to monitor and police that captive workforce, and its goals were two-fold: To add to the databank of information about the population of Java as well as the coffers of the ever-quomodocunquizing East India Company. Data-collecting has always been a part of empire-building and that can be traced back to the oldest empires known. But what is different about the sort of data-collecting that was carried out in the colonies of Southeast Asia in the 19th century was how the process was guided by the belief that societies could be made known and thus regulated and policed, in line with the logic of the Enlightenment itself.

When placing men like Stamford Raffles and James Brooke – and their admirers and successors such as Charles Brooke, Hugh Low, Spencer St John and Hugh Clifford who came later – we can see that they were firmly located in the world of their time, as men who believed in the values of the Western Enlightenment project and who felt that through the study of the non-Western world that world could be denuded, comprehended and ultimately better governed, like Nature itself. Europe's sustained war on Nature would be exported to Asia and Africa, and as Green (2019) has noted by the 19th century:

> [...] A general trend in European thought was that different experiences, material influences, and varying geographical and climatic environments produced specific individual and national behaviors. It was believed that education based on reason would give rise to the same institutions, moral beliefs and scientific truths in all societies, with the progressive perfection of rational decision-making constituting an important marker in the European construction of social hierarchies.[24]

The desire to know Southeast Asia and Southeast Asians better, in order to be able to change and transform them more effectively and lastingly, was among the drivers of the data-collecting projects we see in the writings of men like Raffles, Brooke, Crawfurd et al. And yet in the course of doing so these colonial data-gatherers were oblivious to the fact that their data-collecting was also an instance of *data-assembling*; and in the course of their work they were also effectively discursively framing the object of their research and enquiry. But the blinkered manner in which these colonial functionaries carried on their work meant that they were blind to the eurocentrism of their own gaze, and how as Rattansi (1994) has noted

24 Green, 2019: 24-25.

'the 'discoveries' the West made were as much discoveries, and productions, of *itself* as of the peoples and lands encountered'.[25] (Nandy (1983) has noted that 'Max Müller, for all his pioneering work in Indology and love for India, forbade his students to visit India; to him the India that was living was not the true India, and the India that was true had to be dead'.[26]) Yet the project of Western Enlightenment was precisely that: A *Western* project that bore all the hallmarks of an Occidental mindset that had been developed since Europe emerged from its dark ages and saw its closest and oldest cultural-civilizational neighbour – the Arab-Muslim world – as its enemy and constitutive Other. Bartlett (1993) has noted that exclusionary laws were already at work in Western Europe since the medieval period, and that long before the Western European powers developed and expanded their empires across Asia and Africa they were already discriminating against minorities in Europe itself, through laws that forbade intermarriage between the victorious English and the colonised Irish, and restrictions on subdued subjects that prevented them from joining trade guilds, town councils, etc.[27] By the time that Britain and the other European powers began to establish their footholds in Southeast Asia the images and praxes of exclusion and colonial hierarchies were already in place, for 'the mental habits and institutions of (later) European racism and colonialism were born in the medieval world. [...] The European Christians who sailed to the coasts of the Americas, Asia and Africa came from a society that was already a colonizing society'.[28]

Such mental habits did not change, and despite the universal claims that were made by the Enlightenment that came later, 'the roots of Enlightenment universalism are full of contradictions and limitations, which suggests that universalism was (paradoxically) particular and Eurocentric', as Lloyd (1994) has pointed out.[29] The data-gathering and knowledge-building that these men undertook was thus from the outset a Western colonial-epistemic project, guided by a Western/Occidental gaze that invariably framed the Other in oppositional-dialectical terms, for as Rattansi argues:

> Identities such as 'the West' and 'Europeans', even 'white', their conflations with conceptions of rationality, 'civilization' and Christianity, and

25 Rattansi, 1994: 36.
26 Nandy, 1983: 17.
27 Bartlett, 1993: 236-239.
28 Bartlett, 1993: 313-314.
29 Lloyd, 1994: 223.

> the superimposition on these of images of paganism and savagery as constituted by binaries such as naked/clothed, oral/literate, technologically backward/advanced, were not already 'in place' – they *came into being in processes of imperial exploitation and colonial domination*.[30] (*Emphasis mine.*)

Such binaries were evidently useful in the projects that these colonial data-gatherers attempted, for they justified the positioning of the Western knowledge-producers at the top of the social hierarchy of colonial society (on the grounds that the rational and knowledgeable ought to govern the ignorant and untutored), and also rationalised the colonial project itself (on the grounds that the acquisition of native lands and commodities, the commodification of native labour and the dismissal of native knowledges/epistemologies was justified as the native Other had little to contribute to the Enlightenment project unless they came under European supervision.)

Embedded within the logic of the Enlightenment was the understanding that history was linear and that societies and cultures could be compared to one another and located on a singular historical track – with Europe leading the race. Yet as Cohn (1996) has noted, such a comparative approach 'implied linear directionality', where 'things, ideas, institutions could be seen as progressing through stages to some end or goal. It could also be used to establish regression, decay and decadence, the movement through time away from some pristine, authentic, original starting point, a golden age of the past'[31] – in the manner that Raffles had seen and cast the Javanese as a people who had fallen from their glory days and who had declined to the point that they (and their cultural achievements) could only be saved by Western colonial intervention. The linear teleology at work in this form of 'enlightened imperialism' meant that other societies could be ranked in terms of their progress towards a Western model, and with the West as the guiding standard it was hardly a surprise if other societies invariably failed to meet the mark and ended up being deemed backward, ill-governed or lawless.[32]

As Green (2019) has noted, this was the mindset that led Raffles to the conclusion that the Javanese – as a 'degenerate race' – could *not* have

30 Rattansi, 1994: 36.

31 Cohn, 1996: 55.

32 Cohn (1996) has noted that 'English historians [...] stressed that the arbitrariness of the political order (in India) caused the salient characteristic of despotism to become the insecurity of property', and that 'although it was recognized that there was "law" in India, that "law" was seen to be different from the European kind'. (Cohn, 1996: 63.)

developed their civilization on their own and that they *must* have been colonised in the past by Indians, and therefore could be made to progress again under British colonial guidance.[33] It was also the same mindset that accounted for the wholesale colonial theft and looting that occurred during the British occupation of Java, for it was believed that the Javanese were no longer able to fully appreciate the value of their artefacts and manuscripts and that such objects would be better preserved and studied by Westerners in Europe. (Cohn, 1996; Noor, 2019; Wang, 2019; Murphy, 2019.) Bauman (1989) has noted that the holocaust was not an aberration in the development of Modernity but was in fact one of its outcomes; and in the same vein it can be argued that Raffles' propensity towards colonial policing and the looting of antiquities that took place during his tenure as Lieutenant-Governor of Java *was not an aberration in the workings of racialized colonial-capitalism, but rather its logical outcome too* – driven as it was by the belief that Southeast Asians needed to be saved by an external civilising power.

Not to be outdone, John Crawfurd – who was Raffles' contemporary, a fellow East India Company-man, and according to Hannigan (2012) also a rival of Raffles – was also on a data-gathering mission while he sailed up the Irrawady to the court of Ava. Like Raffles, Crawfurd was keen to gain as much information as he could about Burma, though the circumstances of his stay in the kingdom were very different from Raffles' longer tenure as Lieutenant-Governor in Java. Java was, during Raffles' time, under the rule of the East India Company and British forces, while Burma was then seen as an adversary and an obstacle to British ambitions in the Indian subcontinent. Crawfurd's data-collecting was not limited to gathering information about the land of Burma but also to gain vital strategic data about the state of the kingdom's defences, economy, political system and its relations with other Asian powers and potential Western allies. Crawfurd's data-collecting was as guided a process as Raffles'. The testimonies that he collected – though interviews where leading questions were the norm – provided him with accounts of Burma that were used to strengthen his argument that Burma was a rogue state that might threaten Britain's position in Bengal in the near future.

From his *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820) – where Crawfurd 'used the circular decline-and-fall narrative as his explanatory tool'[34] – to his *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Ava* (1829) and all the way to his

33 Green, 2019: 32.

34 Knapman, 2017: 211.

Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races of Man (1867) that he wrote shortly before his death, Crawfurd had repeatedly demonstrated his polygenetic leanings and his belief that there were distinct and different races; and that the different races were clearly unequal in terms of their capabilities and achievements. Though Crawfurd's attitudes towards colonial race-relations differed from those of Raffles, Brooke or his peers and contemporaries, at no point did he object to the workings of the racialized colonial-capitalist system. (A case in point would be the stance that he took against the anti-opium lobby in colonial Singapore, for he was 'firmly of the belief that opium was, and should be, a legitimate, tradeable commodity'[35] despite the obvious deleterious effect it was having on the Asian coolies who grew addicted to it.) What Crawfurd *did* object to was the notion that colonised Asians could be 'civilised' by having Western culture imposed upon them, on the basis that 'the savage was not an empty vessel waiting to be filled by civilised thought' and that such 'savages' should be left alone while their lands and labour were being appropriated by the colonial government for profit.[36] Crawfurd may have wanted to 'promote legal equality amongst the races' in the colonies as Knapman (2017) has argued, but he did not see the races as equal at the same time.[37] The Asians who were living under British colonial rule were, for him, British subjects and therefore subject to British colonial law, but that did not make them racially equal to their colonisers, and at no point did Crawfurd show sympathy towards the evangelical humanitarians back in England who lamented the workings of Empire overseas.[38]

While the sun of Empire was at its height, the land-grabbing, colony-building imperialists could indeed have their cake and eat it. Men like Raffles, Crawfurd and Brooke were able to present themselves as economic liberals who were indeed keen to open up markets (in the territories of others) and to promote free trade in the most liberal terms, but that was also where the limits of their liberalism ended: In Crawfurd's eyes the Asian Other was seen as legally equal in the eyes of colonial-company law, *but at the same time was never deemed racially equal to Europeans*. One could be an economic liberal and a racist at the same time, and that was true in the 19th century as it is today. But the upshot of Crawfurd's belief in polygenesis was that Asians could be brought within the ambit of the colonial economic-political

35 Knapman, 2017: 132-133.
36 Knapman, 2017: 228.
37 Knapman, 2017: 133, 134.
38 Knapman, 2017: 133, 154, 155.

system, though they remained racially different and were seen as 'savages'. While Crawfurd may have disagreed with Raffles and Brooke about the redemptive power of Western civilization and the 'civilising mission' that the latter sought to impose, and preferred a colonialism with a smaller footprint[39], all of them regarded Southeast Asians in terms of an Other framed in a disabling manner: as the lazy Asiatic, the savage Asiatic, the cunning Asiatic, etc. *These men may have taken different sides in the debate over whether Empire should be maximalist or minimalist, but surely these were two sides of the same imperial coin.* And while the colonisers debated it was the Southeast Asians – be they enemies or allies – who were perpetually framed as the Other who stood on the opposite side of the dialectical fence, as the constitutive Other to the European.

In present-day academic circles there appears to be a debate as to who among the colonisers of the past belonged to the minimalist or maximalist camps; between the school of 'benevolent' imperialism and its sanguinary counterpart. It has to be noted that not only were there very different approaches and styles of empire-building that were employed by the different Western imperial powers (Tarling, 1969; Steinberg, 1985; Taylor, 1987; Carey, 1992; Gopinath, 1996; Taylor, 2003; Tracol-Huynh, 2010; Blanchard 2014; Sysling, 2016, Boshier, 2018; et al.), so were there different modes of colonisation – both direct and indirect – within each of these western imperial domains too. Yet as Vucetic (2011) has noted, the 19th century was also a time when a growing consensus would emerge across the Atlantic as to what the Western world was, where its duty lay and what Empire would come to mean in terms of Western identity and purpose.

While European policy-makers, colonial-capitalists, missionaries and intellectuals debated about the modalities of empire-building – whether it should be aggressive or subtle, maximalist or minimalist – it should be remembered that this was largely a Western debate among Westerners themselves, that took place in the corridors of power and the pamphlets and broadsheets of the Western European world where the non-Western Other was hardly ever invited to speak. There were those like John Crawfurd who might have preferred an empire with a smaller footprint, consisting of well-defended trading outposts in the East surrounded by a sea of 'savage' natives; and men like Stamford Raffles, James Brooke, Hugh Clifford and Andrew Clarke who dreamt of an expansive empire where huge swathes of Asia would come under the Union Jack – though a cynic may argue that a choice between submitting

39 Knapman, 2017: 179.

to maximalist or minimalist imperialism was hardly a choice at all for the Asians themselves. (In any case even if Empire could manifest itself in minimalist terms, Empire's bullets and cannon shells would not be reduced in size or deadly potential.)

An academic exercise to note and highlight the subtle differences between full-on imperialism and 'imperialism lite' is not, in and of itself, problematic; and it may in fact yield interesting insights that are of value. But in the course of doing so we should not forget the fact that *Empire was Empire*, and that notwithstanding whatever methods that were used by the Western imperial powers to extend and entrench their imperial power across Asia – be they harsh or smooth – it was the Asians who were robbed of their political sovereignty in the end. To suggest that there could have been another kind of Empire – a sort of 'softer' imperialism with a smaller footprint – and that such an Empire would have been kinder and more respectful of the native Other foregrounds yet again the prerogatives of the coloniser over the colonised. For even in cases where colonialism was selective in its appropriation of smaller territories (such as the acquisition of Penang by Francis Light, of Singapore by Stamford Raffles and John Crawfurd's wish that the British capture Rangoon) it was the choicest, most strategically important parts of Asia that were acquired and it was the needs of the colonial companies and their Western governments that were prioritised over the needs of the Asians. In these cases the colonial powers were engaged in the acquisition of native territories at minimum political risk and military cost to themselves, and it was the maximization of their economic gains that came first. (As in how the acquisition of Penang did not lead to the East India Company coming to the aid of Kedah when it came under attack by Siam, and how the plight of the Kedahans was later dismissed as 'their' problem and not the Company's.) And even if some like Crawfurd felt that Western culture and education should not have been imposed on other 'Asiatic races', he was not alone in the wider assembly of 19th century empire-builders then: The Dutch in the East Indies and the French in Indochina had opted for precisely the same sort of minimalist approach, preferring to keep the natives in their 'natural state' and not making the mistake of 'over-educating' their colonial subjects. (Thus while Crawfurd may have been in a minority among his British counterparts he was in fact closer in spirit to other European imperialists of the time.)

Men like Raffles, Brooke and Crawfurd, along with their admirers who wrote the accounts of them later such as Low, St. John and Clifford were believers in the idea that the natives of Southeast Asia were a *race apart*,

and that they had 'degenerated' over time and were no longer able to manage their own affairs.[40] From the point of view of the Southeast Asian – be it the rulers of Java, Brunei, Burma and other kingdoms who were forced to submit at gunpoint, or the Asian coolies who were co-opted to serve the colonial economy – it did not matter if Empire had arrived with a smile on its face or not, for they were the ones who lost. Again it has to be stated: Even 'benevolent' imperialism was *still* imperialism, full stop.

In the decades that followed there would be some events of importance, though these did not radically alter the modalities of knowledge-gathering in the age of Empire. The East India Company would breathe its last but that did not ameliorate the workings of colonial-capitalism in the East, and many of the men who would later take up the task of empire-building were cut from the same cloth as their predecessors. In the works of St. John, Low, Daly and Clifford we have seen how the desire to know all that could be known about Southeast Asia did not wane in time. These men produced books that were full of data – much of it correct, it should be noted – as well as numerous maps and charts, reams of statistics and tables, and accounts of their travels across native lands. But in the course of producing all this knowledge, they also injected into their works their own views about the native peoples they had set out to study; and their views of the Southeast Asian Other was hardly a flattering one. From St. John and Low's apprehension about the Chinese in Borneo to Clifford's jaundiced perception of Malay society being trapped in the mire of Asiatic feudalism, none of these knowledge-builders were ever able to see Southeast Asians as human beings equal to Westerners; and few of them were inclined to see value in Southeast Asian systems of belief or local knowledge.

The men whose writings we have looked at did not find themselves in the middle of Java or Burma or Borneo or the Malay Peninsula by a fluke. Nor were they a bunch of dilettantes faffing around whiling away their time: They were willing actors in the drama of racialized colonial-capitalism and in the case of Raffles and Crawfurd in particular were not blind to the fact that the East India Company which they served was also the biggest militarised corporate entity the world had ever seen. When Crawfurd put together his selection of interviews that were crafted in a manner that could only lead his readers to the same conclusion as his own – that Burma was a tyrannical state that needed to be brought down a peg or two – or when Raffles attempted to create an island-wide policing network to control the lives of millions of Javanese, or when Daly attempted to

40 Knapman, 2017: 169.

penetrate into the kingdom of Johor to map its interior while the ruler of Johor was trying to defend his kingdom's sovereignty, these were not instances of colonial functionaries breaking bad. Some of them (like Raffles and Daly) would later face charges of financial impropriety and misconduct, *but none of them were never faulted for wanting to expand the power and dominion of the British Empire*. Hunters and gatherers of data, they were all men of their time and the time they lived in was the age of Empire. It was their active rational agency that led to their elevation in the ranks of the companies and governments they served, and it was also their active mental agency that led to the writing of the books we have looked at here.

Related to the question of Western rational agency in the composition of these works is the question of Southeast Asian agency and the role played by Southeast Asians who may have been invited to assist in the data-collecting that took place, as in the case of the army of native informants that Raffles wished to create through his *Regulations of 1814*. Some historians such as Bayly (1996) have claimed that the building of Empire's information order was a two-way process that required the active participation and support of the colonized as well. And some may argue that the result of all the data-collecting that took place then was a body of knowledge that bore the hallmarks of East and West, and would not have been possible without the help of Asian knowledge-providers. While the latter is undoubtedly true, we must also remember that it was not chance that brought the European powers to Southeast Asia, but that colonialism was driven from the outset by the logic of an imperial political economy that sought to subjugate Asian lands and peoples for political-economic gains. As such it would be inaccurate to suggest that the relationship between the colonial bureaucrat-data-seeker and the native colonial subject in the 19th century was an equal one, any more than the kingdoms of Western Europe stood on an equal footing with their Southeast Asian counterparts. Colonial knowledge-production may have involved the agency of both Europeans and Asians, but theirs was never a relationship of equals and it was the latter that would provide the data, the statistics, the geographical information, etc. that would be compiled, ordered and interpreted by the former. Likewise it would be far-fetched to suggest that the imperial economies were somehow 'hybrid economies' that brought together the best of Europe and Asia, for the truth of the matter was that it was Asia that surrendered its commodities while Europe processed these raw materials in order to manufacture goods that would later be sold back to those who resided in their captive colonial economies. Asia and Asians may have provided the data for the knowledge-building and the commodities for

colonial manufacturing, though the end result was not some kind of 'syncretic' or 'hybrid' knowledge or goods that were entirely untainted by the colonial encounter – and I would argue that it would be wrong of us to celebrate such knowledge for its hybridity while overlooking the power differentials that brought the coloniser and colonised together in the first place.

Southeast Asians did play their role as data-collectors and as helpers in this knowledge-production process, but their role was often relegated to the background, as in the case of the dozens of native porters who lugged the baggage and equipment of Daly, St. John and Clifford as they went about mapping the interior of Borneo and the Malay Peninsula. But their agency was rarely, if ever, credited; and that in itself speaks volumes about how the role and opinions of the native Other was valued by the authors we have looked at. The contemporary reader should therefore not be surprised by the blinkered attitude of these colonial functionaries for they belonged to the same circle of like-minded 'men of knowledge' who were themselves convinced that theirs was the only epistemology worthy of the name. Just how these works could have been seen as 'knowledge' and deemed scientific is another question that begs to be addressed, and here we need to look at the roles played by their respective authors in the wider context of the institutions and societies they worked for and in.

The present-day reader may be appalled by the blatant racism put on display in some of the works we have looked at. But it has to be remembered that Raffles, Crawfurd, St. John and the other authors we have considered here were not writing for the sake of the Southeast Asians whom they were studying and whose lands they were occupying and mapping: They were writing for their own like-minded contemporaries who, like them, held positions of power in militarised companies or colonial administrations – and it could be added that Raffles, Crawfurd and company were probably indifferent to the plight of the white working classes in their countries too.[41] The books we have looked at here were reports that provided information and data to serve the needs of power, written by men in power for other men in power, for the sake of expanding and perpetuating that power. They were not written for the edification of the colonised native communities or for the benefit of the lower classes of European society either.

41 It has to be remembered that attitudes towards colonial subjects abroad were not all that different to attitudes towards the lower working classes back in Europe and America by the end of the 19th century. Bayly (1996) has argued that notwithstanding their proximity to political power the writings of European Orientalists never had a massive impact on their respective societies. (Bayly, 1996: 169.)

By the second half of the nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic there emerged a consensus among men of learning who spoke the same language of scientific racism, peppered with pseudo-scientific theories of polygenesis and racial difference, for whom the ascendancy of the white races was an inevitability. Racism was of course not a new invention then, for as Bartlett (1993) has noted 'while the language of race is biological, its medieval reality was almost entirely cultural'.[42] The leap that was made in the 19th century was in the manner that the earlier *cultural* understanding of race was overtaken by a scientific, biological understanding of it. That the British authors we have looked at in this book shared similar beliefs about the necessity of Empire was not an aberration, and across the Atlantic men like Theodore Lothrop Stoddard (1885-1950) – graduate of Harvard College and Boston University as well as member of the American Historical Association and the American Academy of Political Science – were echoing the same sentiments in later works like *The Rising Tide of Color Against White-World Supremacy* (1921).[43] America's eventual embrace of Empire brought it closer to Western Europe, and led to the emergence of what Vucetic (2011) has dubbed the *Anglosphere*. Back in Southeast Asia the region would see more and more of such 'scientific' works that would further the cause of colonial-scientific enquiry, such as D.J.H. Nyessen's *The Races of Java* (1929) – whose subtitle was *The Acquisition of Some Preliminary Knowledge concerning the Influence of Geographic Environment on the Physical Structure of the Javanese*; and which even came with a map of 'Racial Elements' from Africa to the Pacific islands – was the kind of work on racial theory that was deemed scientific and respectable, at least to the *Indisch Comite voor Wetenschappelijke Onderzoekingen* (East Indies Committee For Scientific Research). Such works – with their propensity to classify and categorise anything and everything – belonged to a tradition of writing that was instrumental to colony-building. And as Mignolo (2015) has pointed out, 'classification is an epistemic manoeuvre rather than an ontological entity that carries with it the essence of the classification. It is a system of classification enacted by actors, institutions and categories of thought that enjoy the privilege of being hegemonic or dominant, and which imposes itself as ontological truth reinforced by 'scientific' research'.[44] To look for 'truth' in such works

42 Bartlett, 1993: 197.

43 Stoddard, Theodore Lothrop. *The Rising Tide of Color Against White-World Supremacy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.

44 Walter Mignolo, *Yes, We Can*. Foreword to Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* London: Zed Books. 2015: xi.

would miss the point that the truth did not matter as much as the *power* of these texts to provide a coherent narrative that justified the workings of a racialized colonial system. It is this factor that locates these works and their authors at the very heart of the colonial-capitalist power-knowledge complex.

The discourse of scientific data-based imperialism was in many ways a 19th century phenomenon, and we can understand it today by looking at it from a Wittgensteinian perspective. Edward Said's central argument in *Orientalism* (1978) holds true, though it could be added that within the broad framework of Orientalist writing there existed a plethora of different types of writing-enquiry, of which the kind of data-collecting we have looked at in this book was but one. Here is where Wittgenstein's theory of language-games becomes relevant, for it was he who noted that within language-use in general there are in fact many types of language-use, each with its own set of rules and norms, in the same way that within the broad array of games that can be played there are a myriad of different games, each with rules of their own. In his *Philosophical Investigations* (1945, 1958) Wittgenstein alludes to the fact that learning a language is never simply a case of learning *a* language, but rather learning the different sets of rules that are at work when we use language differently. We are never 'born' liars any more than we are 'born' jokers. (Regardless of what your teacher may have told you at school.) We have to *learn* how to lie, as we need to *learn* how to joke – and by extension we also learn, in the process of language-acquisition – how to speak and write rhetorically, literally, poetically, sarcastically and scientifically. In this respect the discourse of scientific data-based colonial-capitalism was a language-game as described by Wittgenstein. *And the upshot of this is that one is never born a colonial-capitalist, but one has to learn how to think and write like one.*

Related to this learning process is situational context, and as Wittgenstein also noted, the learning of the rules of various language-games is dependent on the context in which those language-games arise and make sense. As we learn how to joke, we also learn where and when to joke and we come to understand that one does not joke at a funeral. The language-game of the army is learned on the parade ground and the barracks; the language-game of finance is learned in corporate boardrooms and shady tax havens, and so was the language-game of racialized colonial-capitalism developed in the context of the militarised colonial companies and colonial administrations where it was spoken and used. This reminds us of the fact that the works we have looked at in this book were books of a particular kind, written by writers of a particular kind and addressed to a readership of a particular kind – who happened to be the elites at the top of the steamy colonial-capitalist pile. The authors I have looked at in this book were all men who chose to join the colonial companies and governments that they willingly served, learned the

language-rules of those organisations and laboured with the goal of Empire in mind, which places the burden of moral responsibility squarely on their shoulders. In the same way that Bourdieu's *homo academicus* (1990) lived and worked in a rule-governed environment where academic discourse abided by conventions agreed upon by its language-users, so did *homo colonialismus* speak and write according to their own set of *Sprachregelungen* that was distinctive. It is that which makes the works we have looked at look so dated, so 19th century, and so very colonial to boot.

Wittgenstein also made the important observation that new language-games may emerge while some language-games may die as a result of changes in historical circumstances; and there is ample evidence to show that his argument was correct. The kind of seaside humour that was once popular in the 1960s – typified by comedy shows such as the *Benny Hill Show* – are no longer seen as funny, while new forms of humour – including memes and insider jokes commonly found on social media – seem to be appreciated by millennials the world over. It is not as if one fine morning the world decided that Benny Hill wasn't funny after all, but that other changes in society – the advancement of women's rights, growing consciousness about racism and sexism in the media – rendered the language-game of the *Benny Hill Show* untenable. The same can be said about how the language-game of racialized colonial-capitalism eventually lost its captivating grip, thanks to the shifting geopolitical realities that became increasingly evident as the era of Empire drew to an end, heralding the 'information panic' (Bayly, 1996) that came with it.[45]

III. Imperial Hubris: When Empire's Archive Fell Apart

> As with panics with witches, heretics, Jesuits and freemasons in Europe, (colonialism's information panic) reflected the weakness of the new quasi-bureaucratic state in its own hinterland rather than premeditated attempts to master society.[46]
>
> Christopher Alan Bayly,
> *Empire and Information* (1996)

45 Bayly (1996) had concluded that colonial data-gathering which brought with it its own modalities of knowledge-production, policing and surveillance ironically helped to prepare South Asians for the intellectual revolution that would lead to calls for independence in the 20th century. (Bayly, 1996: 375-376.)

46 Bayly, 1996: 171

Data-collecting, surveillance and social-geographical mapping were not preoccupations unique to the European colonial powers, and as Firges, Graf, Roth and Tulasoğlu (2014) have shown the same desire to know all that could be known across the length and breadth of the empire was a preoccupation of the Ottomans as well.[47] Another non-Western country that readily accepted the tools of the modern panopticon state was Japan during the Meiji era (1868-1912). (In fact one of the first modern prisons built during the Meiji period was based exactly on Bentham's panopticon model, and is preserved today at Japan's Meiji Mura historical park.) With the backing of influential statesmen like Inukai Tsuyoshi and Okuma Shigenobu, the government of the Meiji emperor began sending delegations to Southeast Asia to learn more about Southeast Asian societies and began mapping Indochina in earnest.[48] While the Ottoman Turks and the Japanese may have regarded the Western imperial powers as competitors and adversaries, they did not hesitate to embrace Western modes of data-collecting and knowledge-production that contributed to the development of their own imperial domains.

By the last quarter of the 19th century the peoples of Southeast Asia had been classified and catalogued, and appointed their respective roles in the plural economic system that would be the standard in almost all of the colonies. Their identities were also fixed, and reproduced *ad infinitum* in later works where Asia and Asians were put on display – such as in Blackie and Son's *Comprehensive Atlas & Geography of the World* (1882) where a chromolithograph bearing the title 'The Malay Race' featured samples of Southeast Asians taken from the earlier works of Marryat (1848), Hardouin (1872) and others. That the image lumped together Dayaks from Borneo and Javanese from Java together as 'Malays' did not seem to matter, for by then the native Other had been epistemically arrested for good and shoved into categories not of their own choosing. (Noor, 2016.b.)

The end of the era of the gunboat meant that a new kind of colonial power was rising, one that increasingly relied on researcher-administrators and data-collectors. In British Malaya the perpetuation of colonial power was thanks to the work of men such as Richard Olaf Winstedt (1878-1966), Herbert Deane Noone (1907-1943) and Oliver William Wolters (1915- 2000). Winstedt, as Assistant Director of colonial education in Malaya, was the one who was later

47 See: Pascal Firges, Tobias Graf, Christian Roth and Gülay Tulasoğlu (Eds.), *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History.* Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2014.

48 See: *Indochina Country Map: Southeast Area*. Geographical and Mapping Bureau of the Japanese Army, Tokyo, 1896. YG827- 427/428/429/430. Four maps of Indochina, with Katakana phonetic script and Chinese script. Map room, Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan.

responsible for the 'rural bias' that would come to dominate the British colonial education system.[49] Herbert Noone in turn was the anthropologist whose work on the aboriginal communities in interior Malaya led him to the conclusion that the aborigines of the colony should not be converted to Christianity, but rather allowed to assimilate with other native communities in order to survive.[50] While Oliver Wolters would eventually become the director of the British colonial psychological warfare unit in the colony.[51] British Malaya – like Britain's other colonies in Asia, as well as the other Western colonies across the region – had by then been thoroughly mapped and studied, and the groundwork for this decidedly modern mode of colonial micro-management had been laid

49 Richard Olaf Winstedt (1878-1966) was appointed the Assistant Director of Colonial Education in the British Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States. He wrote a report which compared the style and standards of colonial education in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines that was published in 1917. He concluded that the system of education employed by the Dutch was of a more practical level because it concentrated on teaching them agricultural skills instead of subjects such as history and science, which he regarded as useless for Malays. In *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (1967) William Roff noted that Winstedt felt it was much more important to develop the vernacular schooling system within its prescribed limits and by doing so laid the 'rural bias' that was to dominate in colonial policies in the area of native education in British Malaya. Winstedt regarded the chronicles and histories of the Malay peoples as being of no value whatsoever. In his report on vernacular education, he described such works as mere 'fairy-tales that stand for history', the teaching of which he regarded as futile. [R.O. Winstedt. *The Malays: A Cultural History,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1947.]

50 Herbert Deane Noone (1907-1943) was an anthropologist who also worked for the Perak Museum of Taiping. Noone was the first scholar to carry out a survey of the Senoi people living along the Perak-Kelantan border, and his *Report on the Settlement and Welfare of the Ple-Temiar Senoi of the Perak-Kelantan watershed* (1936) suggested that the British authorities in Perak ought to intervene directly in the re-settlement of the Temiar people who he believed were in need of colonial protection. Later this report by Noone became the framework for the Perak *Aboriginal Tribes Enactment* of 1939. Despite the pastoral attitude he took towards the natives of the interior, Noone was a controversial figure. He was said to be married to a Temiar woman and during the long periods of field research in the Temiar forests compiled some of the first Temiar dictionaries. He later felt that the Temiar were under threat due to the encroachment of both Europeans and Malays; though he felt that the Temiar would be better served if they were allowed to 'become Malay' rather than converted to Christianity. [See: Holman, Dennis, *Noone of the Ulu*. London: Heinemann. 1958; Toshihiro, Nobuta. *Living on the Periphery: Development and Islamisation among the Orang Asli of Malaysia.* Kuala Lumpur: Centre for Orang Asli Concerns. 2009.]

51 Oliver William Wolters (1915- 2000) was an officer in the British Malayan colonial service. He entered the Malayan colonial civil service in 1937 and up to the Second World War was posted in various parts of British Malaya, where he learned the local languages and also studied the various communities and ethnic groups in the colony. During the period of Japanese military occupation throughout World War Two, he was captured and later detained in Changi, Singapore.After the end of World War Two he was brought back into the British colonial civil service, and rose up the ranks. In 1955 he was selected to be the Director of the British Psychological Warfare Unit that was based in Kuala Lumpur, on account of his knowledge of the peoples and languages of Malaya.

decades earlier by the likes of Raffles, Crawfurd, St. John, Low, Daly and Clifford. To their data was added even more data, and the realm of the unknown shrank accordingly. And the fact that so many of these later researcher-administrators were involved in the gathering of military intelligence is an indicator of how blurred the line between knowledge-building and colonial policing had become.

In time however this race for information and data would give rise to a new crisis that was of its own making. As British, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese and later American data-collectors and knowledge-builders went about their task mapping and studying every part of Southeast Asia that came under their control, the question arose as to how all this data and information was to be stored, managed and made sense of. This led to the crisis of entropy that Richards (1993) has written about, and it occasioned the belief that human mastery over information might not, after all, be possible in the long run:

> The concept of entropy came into being precisely because the possibility of positive knowledge was beginning to be eclipsed by an explosion of too much positive knowledge. Information was the name given to this knowledge that came from everywhere and ended up nowhere. Information was archival without belonging to an archive, vast but not total, extensive but not complete. Information was positive knowledge that refused to become comprehensive. Information meant knowledge without the central structuring agency of an archive, or a totalizing metastable structure for knowledge. The Victorian information explosion threatened the sense that human understanding could ever achieve mastery over knowledge.[52]

The problem of having too much data and not knowing how to organize it was one of the inevitable results of imperial overreach, and it reminds us of the memorandum sent out by the Marques de Sonora in 1786 which we mentioned at the beginning of this book. In British Burma and British Malaya, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies and the Spanish (and later American) Philippines, the various colonial governments had erected impressive structures of colonial control and knowledge. Yet the 'empire of information' – to borrow Bayly's (1996) term – that the British had tried to build in India and Southeast Asia would eventually fall apart as it rested on shaky foundations in the first place.[53] This data-collecting project suffered from its own Eurocentric bias from the start, for it took off from the premise that the non-Western world could and had to be understood and rendered

52 Richards, 1993: 76.

53 Bayly, 1996: 365-366, 375, 376

knowable by Europeans while at the same time maintaining the hierarchies of racial difference and notions of Western racial supremacy upon which racialized colonial-capitalism worked.

Colonial-administrative disconnect – which was the result of the racial hierarchies that the colonisers had themselves introduced – meant that Empire's organs of knowledge and data-collecting would invariably end up in the 'zone of ignorance' where the colonisers were less and less inclined and able to interact with the people who knew what was going on, namely the natives themselves. (Bayly, 1996) Prejudice, ignorance and a false sense of intellectual superiority among those who led the project meant that the Southeast Asians they encountered and wrote about would always be framed in terms of tropes and caricatures that were self-serving to themselves while being further from the truth. It was in the stuffy antechambers of colonial knowledge and power that the colonizers met and interacted with the like-minded (as in the manner that Crawfurd had chosen to interview mostly Westerners in his data-collecting for his report and his *Embassy to the Court of Ava*, and how Spencer St. John had called upon other Westerners, namely the Reverend Walter Chambers, the Reverend William Chalmers, the Reverend William Gomez and Charles Johnson Esq. to verify his findings about the natives of Borneo) that 'the stereotypes of thugs, criminal guilds, religious fanatics and well-poisoners were hatched' by the Europeans themselves.[54]

What men like Raffles, Daly and Clifford connived to do in Java, Borneo and the Malay Peninsula was not all that different from what had been put into practice earlier in India, where military-strategic information was collected and analysed alongside information about the cultures, histories and literature of Asians, as Bayly (1996) has demonstrated.[55] But as Empire's vast and lumbering body of data began to fragment and the knowledge collected grew too big to manage, the fissures within this columbarium of knowledge grew ever more apparent; and the cracks were widened further by the agency of those Asian subordinates who had been brought into Empire's data-collecting machine and who were later among the first to critique the workings of Empire, in what Scott (1990) has described as the 'public declaration of the hidden transcript'.[56] Be it in the instances of intellectual resistance among Indian colonial subjects[57] or the Western-educated intelligentsia in British Burma (Taylor, 1987; Boshier, 2018) and British Malaya (Roff, 1967;

54 Bayly, 1996: 143.
55 Bayly, 1996: 7.
56 Scott, 1990: 202.
57 Bayly, 1996: 180-211, 314, 315-336.

Milner, 1982, 2002), the results were the same. By the end of the 19th century the Enlightenment-inspired project of total data-collection was falling apart. Bayly (1996) notes that despite the mountains of data that had been collected the British authorities in India had failed to see the rebellion of 1857 coming, and were 'fighting blind'; while Roff (1967) has shown that attempts at colonial education in British Malaya did not achieve the results that were intended. In the case of Malaya the creation of colonial schools led to the development of a new class of vernacular Malay intelligentsia who would be among the first to criticise the workings of racialized colonial-capitalism from within.

From South to Southeast Asia, resistance to colonial rule emerged from within the very communities that were the intended targets of colonial education and pastoral care, and in many cases these native anti-colonial movements employed the very same tools and instruments that were introduced by the colonial powers themselves: the printing press, the postal system, the modern company and the modern school. Resistance to colonial rule was often nuanced and complex, with anti-colonial activists employing the tools of modern Western technology while rejecting an epistemology which they regarded as Occidental and alien. In India, Hindu activism began with the formation of the *Arya Samaj* (est. 1875) up to the *Rashtriya Swayansevak Sangh* (est. 1925). In 1891 Anagarika Dharmapala created the Maha Bodhi Society along with its own journal, with the aim of reviving Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia while resisting the work of Christian missionaries there. In 1896 Andres Bonifacio formed and led the anti-colonial *Katipunan* movement in the Philippines, which gathered momentum and continued even after the arrival of the Americans as the latest colonial power in Southeast Asia. In British Burma, Burman-Buddhist activism grew as it was led by Buddhist intellectuals who were among the recipients of colonial education in the colony. Even after the French colonial authorities replaced the Buddhist cosmological maps used in Cambodia (in 1919) with Western topographical maps, native anti-colonial resistance grew stronger in the very institutions they had introduced to control the natives: the school, the press and the market. Like the Roman Empire whose roads were used to project Roman power to the edges of the empire but which were later used by Rome's enemies to invade her, it seemed that the architecture of Empire in Southeast Asia was being turned against itself.

The crisis of colonial governance, that began to show itself at the end of the 19th century and which grew increasingly evident during the inter-war decades, was both a crisis of maladministration and data overload. In the sense that the colonial authorities no longer knew what to do – for they believed that they already knew all that could be known – it was a crisis of undecidability, as defined by Sayyid (1997):

> Crisis describes the situation in which sedimented relations and practices become unsettled; when the unity of a certain field of discursivity is disarticulated. This leads to the disruption of routinization. As the space of sedimented social relations shrinks, the terrain of undecidability expands. That is, in terrain in which the dislocation of structure introduces a radical ambiguity of identity, the resolution of crisis cannot be deduced from the terms of the crisis, since the expansion of undecidability precludes the possibility of deriving outcomes from that crisis. By definition, one cannot predict the undecidable.[58]

Notwithstanding the thousands of maps, reports, censuses, development plans and racial-typological studies that had been carried out for more than a century, the colonial administrators were unable to answer the simple question of why the colonised natives did not want to live under their rule. Blinkered as they were by their own cognitive bias and sheltered in the bubble they created for themselves, Western scholars and analysts of Southeast Asian society and politics often fell back on the same repertoire of Orientalist tropes of the Other, and this bias was shared by right-wing conservatives and left-leaning progressives alike.[59]

When data failed to explain the causes of native unrest, it was the machine gun that became the tool of last resort. Bayly (1996) has highlighted the human failings of the colonial enterprise – *all too human*, as Nietzsche might say. The racism that underscored colonial policing and surveillance would later account for the paranoia that came with the eventual collapse of Empire, where the colonisers' 'assessments of native crime, religion and native lethargy were more often reflections of the weakness and ignorance of the colonisers than a gauge of hegemony'.[60] Having fed themselves on a staple diet of Orientalist tropes of native savages, pirates and head-hunters for so long, it was hardly a surprise that as the sun of Empire began to set the framed native Other would return to spook them all. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Decolonisation and the end of Empire was a

58 Sayyid, 1997: 24.

59 As late as in 1960, the British socialist thinker John Lowe, while writing about newly-independent Malaya in the journal of the Fabian Society of London, opined that 'the Malays are an unsophisticated, technically underdeveloped rural people; the Malayan Chinese are technically resourceful and economically energetic' (p. 1) and that 'the mass of the Malay peasantry are traditionalist, suspicious and often superstitious, offering formidable resistance to change' (p. 22). [See: Lowe, John. 'The Malayan Experiment', in: Fabian International and Commonwealth Bureau, Fabian Society, London. Research Series 213. 1960.]

60 Bayly, 1996: 143; 142-179.

hurried, graceless and often bloody process in the post-war years, and with Empire's demise came the end of the language-game of 19th century data-based racialized colonial-capitalism. But it has to be noted that the postcolonial states of Southeast Asia today were built on the same foundations of the colonies of old, and that in some instances continuities persist – particularly in the manner in which the postcolonial states of Asia today have retained the belief that data and knowledge can be put to work by the postcolonial state. It is to that subject that I shall turn to next, by way of conclusion.

IV. The Panopticon Today: Data-Gathering and Governance in Present-day Postcolonial Southeast Asia

> We must bear in mind that some twentieth century converts to the colonial ideology are present among the indigenous people. An ideology is never confined to its originating group. It is also shared by those dominated by the system of which the ideology is the rationalisation.
>
> Syed Hussein Alatas,
> *The Myth of the Lazy Native*

The Panopticon, once built, was never really disassembled. As Hirshman (1986, 1987) has pointed out, it has been impossible to entirely erase the legacy of colonial rule in Southeast Asia for the simple reason that the epistemology of Empire remains in use in so many ways, not least in the manner in which concepts such as 'race' remain in circulation in postcolonial Southeast Asia until today. By the end of the 19th century Southeast Asia's multicultural societies had been redefined as *multiracial* societies, and here the concepts of race and racial difference were undoubtedly pivotal. But as Darwin (2008) has argued, the scientific understanding of racial difference – a concept so foreign to Southeast Asia that there are no words for the same in any of the native languages of the region – was an idea that would later be adapted and adopted by the colonised subjects themselves, for:

> [...] the idea of race did not remain a European (or Euro-American) monopoly. It was highly exportable. If being a 'race' was the secret of European power, then its attractions were obvious. By the end of the (nineteenth) century, the new Chinese nationalism of Sun Yat Sen was

> deploying the notion of a distinctive Han race, the true Chinese nation. In colonial Bengal, where the Hindu *bhadralok* ('respectable people') resented exclusion from government and the disparaging language of their colonial masters, nationalist rhetoric turned the racial tables. The 'Hindu race' was much the most civilized.[61]

When Hadji Samanhudi (1868-1956) and Hadji Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto (1882-1934) created the *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (Muslim Merchants' Cooperative) in Surakarta, Central Java, in 1911 it was their intention to bring together Javanese batik producers in an effort to pool their wealth and expand their business network. But by then the native merchants of Java had already developed a clear idea of who their racial adversaries were, and it was the Dutch and Chinese who were framed as the threats to Javanese economic development. Likewise in Burma the development of Burmese nationalism eventually manifested itself in the form of *Burman* nationalism, where Burman racial identity was framed against other 'races' that shared the country.

But the concept of race was not the only thing that was inherited by the postcolonial states of Southeast Asia. A cursory look at the map of the region today will show that the political boundaries of Southeast Asia are basically the same colonial boundaries that were set during the 19th century and agreed upon by the various Western colonial powers that ruled the roost then, through agreements such as the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1871 – though today those borders are patrolled and policed with the latest forms of drone surveillance technology.[62]

With colonial-era borders came the understanding of the nation-state that was largely built upon the Westphalian model, and with that also came the technocratic-bureaucratic mindset that views society as a thing that ought to be rendered knowable in order for it to be governed well. Notwithstanding the fact that present-day scholars have begun to raise serious questions about the Western-centric bias that can be seen in disciplines such as International Relations (Waever, 1998), and the fact that historians have long alluded to the existence of precolonial understandings of power and politics in Asia (Gullick, 1965; Coedes, 1968; Geertz, 1980; Milner, 1982,

61 Darwin, 2008: 348.

62 See: 'ASEAN Summit: Police Coast Guard beef up border security with coastal surveillance cameras'. Channel News Asia, Singapore. 11 November 2018. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/asean-summit-police-coast-guard-beef-up-border-security-with-314-10918448. Accessed 26 June 2019.

2002, 2015; Chaudhuri, 1990; Asmah, 2003; Acharya and Buzan, 2010; Chong, 2012; Salmah, 2014), the modern nation-state is still seen as a given and remains the dominant paradigm in governance and international relations across Southeast Asia. With the acceptance of the nation-state model as the operative norm across the region has come the acceptance of the global status quo as well. In the domains of research and academic writing Southeast Asians are still inclined to study themselves – in the manner that they were once studied by colonial scholars and researchers – and the region is still seen as fertile ground for foreign-funded research too. When lamenting this state of affairs and commenting on the phenomenon of 'helicopter research', Minasny and Fiantis (2018) have observed that 'researchers from wealthier countries fly to a developing country like Indonesia, take samples, fly out, analyze the samples elsewhere, and publish the results with little involvement of local scientists' and where 'at best, local scientists are used to provide logistics'.[63] *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

The global arena in turn is one where the grand narratives of old are still being rehashed in new forms, and where as Furedi (1994) and Neocleous (2011) have shown, ideas of 'civilization' and 'civilizing missions' remain with us and find expression in campaigns to promote democracy in the developing world to the so-called 'War on Terror' which is seen by some Neo-Cons as a civilizing offensive.[64] Postcolonial Southeast Asia is part of this new world order, and despite the occasional lapse into nostalgia and unreconstructed imaginings of a distant glorious past, has never ever made a real leap back to the precolonial world visualized in the work of Chaudhuri (1990). Southeast Asia has embraced globalization with relish, and from the 1980s the region has experienced a boom in capital-led development which has brought with it all the tools and toys of social management and control.

Living as we do today in a world where almost everything we do, write and like on the internet is constantly monitored – and where our life-choices are recorded by unseen corporations and sold as big data (Norris, 1999; Lyon, 2001, 2009) – it would not be a surprise if the luddites among us lament the bygone days of invisibility and freedom from constant connectivity. Yet as Weiner et al. (2003) have shown, the twentieth century was truly a century of human management where technology was put to use by the state – from Revolutionary Russia to Fascist Italy to Nazi Germany

63 Budiman Minasny and Dian Fiantis, 'Helicopter Research: Who Benefits from International Studies in Indonesia?' 29 August 2018.

64 Neocleous, 2011: 147, 149-150.

up to present-day corporate America – in a sustained effort to landscape the garden of humanity.[65] Landscaping the human garden can, however, also take on more brutal forms and in the political context can come to mean the weeding out of those who are deemed a threat to the state and the powers that be, as Melvin (2018) has shown in her harrowing study of how the extermination of Leftists in Indonesia in 1965 – which was made possible thanks to the existence of comprehensive databases on left-leaning intellectuals, activists and members of the Indonesian Communist Party. The genocide that took place then, like the mass killings in Cambodia during the days of the Khmer Rouge, were facilitated and expedited thanks to the availability of data: lists of names and addresses, photo albums of suspects, maps of their whereabouts. And as Lyon (2010) has argued, so pervasive are these technologies of liquid surveillance today that even parents can now spy on their children's whereabouts and listen in on their conversations with their friends.[66] In the postmodern age of late industrial capitalism where surveillance has become accepted as a normal part of daily life in East and West, by (former) coloniser and (former) colonised alike, we do not even seem to see the irony that a reality TV show where the audience is invited to observe the most intimate interactions between strangers can be entitled *Big Brother*. (Obviously not everyone has read Orwell.) Everyone can build their own panopticon these days, and that includes the governments of Southeast Asia too.

The point that I have tried to make in this book however is that this proclivity for data-collecting and surveillance is not new and therefore should not surprise us; and that in the case of Southeast Asia it can be traced back to the 19th century when the colonial states that were built by the Western powers were founded upon carefully sifted data and curated knowledge. The books we have looked at here are all examples of the kind of writing on Southeast Asia that was produced at the height of Empire in the 19th century, and the manner in which Southeast Asians were framed by the authors of these books reflects the prejudicial attitudes that were part of the discursive landscape of racialized colonial-capitalism. Now that the guns have fallen silent and the gunboats have sailed away, there is the tendency to see such works as 'classics' in their own right, and appraise them as some of the earliest examples of serious scholarship in the domain of Southeast Asian studies. There is some truth to this claim, for these works were indeed pioneering in their time; and it could also be argued that these

65 Weiner, Amir. (Ed.) *Landscaping the Human Garden.* 2003.
66 Lyon, David. 'Liquid Surveillance'. 2010: 331.

works on Southeast Asia can and should still be read despite the evident biases and agendas of their authors, on the grounds that we 'can learn from mistakes, even and especially in the masterpieces'. (Jackson, 2017:19) I am inclined to agree with the position taken by the likes of Jackson and Myers (2017), but *only* if in the course of recognising those mistakes we also identify the subject-positions of these authors and locate them in the structures of power and authority that they occupied – that is as colony-builders who wrote about Southeast Asia with the intention of reducing these places and peoples to objects of knowledge that would later be put to use for the sake of Empire.[67]

What I have done in this book is to offer a re-reading of these 19th century texts – by focusing on the minutiae and combing through their appendices. In this process of excavation my intention was to uncover the agendas and plans of the authors themselves, to demonstrate that their works were not simply histories of Southeast Asia but also databanks of information that would later be put to work in the process of empire-building. Some may question such an approach, on the grounds that such an endeavour may restate the primacy of these works, valorise their worth, and affirm their status as 'classics'. In response to that I can only concur with the argument of Jackson earlier, and note that even classics can be re-read critically and in the course of doing so re-evaluated as well. In the context of today's debates about the decolonisation of knowledge and disciplines I personally feel that it is more important than ever that such works are read critically by postcolonial scholars who are in a better informed position to identify the subject-position of the authors we have looked at. It can also be pointed out that none of the authors I have looked at – from Raffles to Crawfurd to Low, or St. John or Clifford – could have imagined that a century after their passing a Southeast Asian scholar such as myself, having penetrated the linoleum-lined corridors of academia, would be re-reading their works in a critical manner; in the same way that 19th century defenders and proponents of scientific Patriarchy could not have imagined that their pseudo-scientific theories of gender difference would one day be critically dissected by a future generation of feminist scholars and scientists and exposed for the bunkum that it truly was.

The books we have looked at here contained an astounding amount of data; and that data was, as I have tried to show, collected and framed by their authors in such a way as to lead their readers to the same conclusions

67 See: Myers, Fred. 'Rant or Reason: Old Wine and New Bottles in Anthropology', 2017; Jackson, John L. 'Bewitched By Boas', 2017.

as their own – namely that Empire was justifiable, inevitable and desirable. *Data-collecting was thus never a cosmetic accessory to Empire; it was the bedrock upon which its architecture rested and upon which its modalities of social management and policing were based*. If present-day romantics imagine that the past was a time where one could live quietly and anonymously, they should think again: from Raffles' ambition to build a policing system that encompassed the whole of Java to Clifford's maps of the Malay Peninsula that revealed everything there was to know, the 19th century was a period of intense probing, unearthing and revealing, where at the end of it all almost all of Southeast Asia had been mapped and all Southeast Asians had been accounted for, discursively framed, and slotted into typologies that were arresting. The final result was a vast body of knowledge as they had never seen, but also one that denuded Southeast Asia and its people like Phryne before the Areopagus. Southeast Asia had come to be known, and in the process so was it colonised via these modalities of knowledge-building and information-gathering.

Appendix A

Proclamation of Lord Minto, Governor-General of British India, at Molenvliet, Java, 11 September 1811[1]

For the satisfaction of the inhabitants and people of Java, the following provisions are made public, in testimony of the sincere disposition of the British government to promote their prosperity and welfare. The refusal of the late government to treat for their interests, although disabled by the events of war from affording them any further protection, has rendered the consequent establishment of the British authority unconditional. *But an English government does not need the articles of a capitulation to impose those duties which are prompted by a sense of justice and benevolent disposition.* The people of Java are exhorted to consider their new connection with England as founded on principles of mutual advantage, and to be conducted in a spirit of kindness and affection.
Providence has brought to them a protecting and benevolent government; they will cheerfully perform the reciprocal duties of allegiance and attachment. (*Emphasis mine.*)

1. *His Majesty's subjects in Java will be entitled to the same general privileges as enjoyed by the natural-born subjects of Great Britain in India*, subject to regulations as now exist, or may hereafter be provided, respecting residence in any of the Honourable Company's territories. (*Emphasis mine.*)

2. They will have the same privilege and freedom of trade to and with all countries to the East of the Cape of Good Hope, and also with His Majesty's European dominions, as are possessed by natural-born subjects of Great Britain.

3. Dutch gentlemen will be eligible to all offices of trust, and will enjoy the confidence of the government, according to their respective characters, conduct, and talents, in common with British-born subjects.

4. The vexatious system of monopoly, which is understood to have heretofore prevailed, in some instances to an oppressive and inconvenient

1 Reproduced in Appendix D, Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: liv-lv.

extent, will be revised, and a more beneficial and politic principle of administration will be taken into consideration soon, and to such extent, as full information on the subject can be obtained, as established usage and habit may admit, and may be consistent with a due regard of the health and morals of the people.

5. The Dutch laws will remain provisionally in force, under the modifications which will be hereinafter expressed, until the pleasure of the supreme authorities in England shall be known; and is conceived that no material alteration therein is to be apprehended.

The modifications to be now adapted are the following:

First. Neither torture nor mutilation shall make part of any sentence to be pronounced against criminals.

Secondly. *When a British-born subject is convicted of any offence, no punishment shall be awarded against him, more severe that would be inflicted by the laws of England for the same crime. And in case of doubt concerning the penalty by English law, reference shall be made to the Honourable the Recorder of Prince of Wales' Island* (Penang)*, whose report shall be a sufficient warrant for awarding the penalty stated to be agreeable to the laws of England. No sentence against any British-born subject, for any crime or misdemeanour, shall be carried into execution, until a report shall have been made to the lieutenant-governor.* (*Emphasis mine*.)

Thirdly. *No sentence of death against any person whatever shall be carried into execution, until report shall have been made to the lieutenant-governor.* (*Emphasis mine*.)

Fourthly. *The lieutenant-governor will have the power of remitting, moderating, or confirming, all penalties; excepting inconsiderable fines, short imprisonment, or slight corporal punishment.* (*Emphasis mine*.)

Fifthly. British-born subjects shall be amenable to the jurisdiction of the Dutch tribunals, and to the Dutch laws in all cases of civil complaint or demands, whether they be plaintiffs or defendants.

Sixthly. All British-born subjects shall be subject to the regularities of police, and to the jurisdiction of the magistrates charged with the execution

thereof, and with the maintenance of the peace and of public tranquillity and serenity.

Seventhly. *All persons belonging to or attached to the army, who are by their conditions subject to military law, shall, for the present, be tried for any crimes they commit only by courts-martial, unless sent by the military authorities to civil courts.* (*Emphasis mine.*)

Eighthly. It being necessary in all countries that a power should exist of forming regulations in the nature of legislative provisions, adapted to change of circumstances, or meet any emergency that may arise, and the great distance of the British authorities in Europe rendering it expedient that the said power should, for the present, reside in some accessible quarter, *it is declared, that the lieutenant-governor shall have full power and authority to pass such legislative regulations*, as, on deliberation, and after due consultation and advice, may appear to him indispensably necessary, *and that they shall have the full force of law. But the same shall be immediately reported to the governor-general in council in Bengal, together with the lieutenant-governor's reasons for passing the said regulations, and any representations that may have been submitted to him against the same*; and the regulations so passed will be confirmed or disallowed by the governor-general in council with the shortest possible delay. The mode in which the lieutenant-governor shall be assisted with advice will hereafter be made known, and such regulations will hereafter be framed as may be thought more conducive to the prompt, pure, and impartial administration of justice, civil and criminal. (*Emphasis mine.*)

Regulations respecting the paper currency, as well as the relative value of coins circulating in Java, will be published in a separate paper of this date.

Done at Molenvliet, the 11th of September 1811.
By His Excellency the Governor-General of British India.
(Signed) Minto.

Appendix B

Proclamation of Stamford Raffles, Lieutenant-General of Java, At Batavia, Java, 15 October 1813[1]

Proclamation, *declaring the* Principles *of the* Intended Change *of* System.

The Right Honourable Lord Minto, previous to his departure from Java, having adverted to the general system of the administration, and of the internal management established under the former government of this island, was pleased to suggest and recommend such improvements, as upon correct information, and an adequate knowledge of the state of society amongst the native inhabitants, might be deemed conducive to the advancement of individual happiness and public prosperity.

With a view to promote so desirable an event, the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor in Council nominated a Committee, of which Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Mackenzie was president, who, with the zeal, talent, and industrious research which characterised the officer, obtained, with the aid of the members of the Committee, authentic statistical accounts of this island; while the fund of valuable information, thus acquired, has been increased from other respectable channels of communication.

The Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor in Council has, therefore, after the most mature consideration, deemed it advisable to establish an improved system of political economy throughout this island, with the intention of ameliorating the condition of its inhabitants, by affording the protection of individual industry, which will ensure to every class of society the equitable and undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of labour; and while it is confidently expected that private happiness and public prosperity will be advanced under this change of system, such alterations and amendments will be hereafter adopted, as experience may suggest, or the improving habits and manners of the body of the people may seem to require.

1 Reproduced in Appendix L, Raffles, 1817, vol. 2: cxlviii-cl.

The following principles for the basis of this new arrangement, and are being made public for general information:

1. The undue influence and authority of the native chiefs have been restricted: but government will avail themselves to their services in the important department of the native police, which will be arranged upon fixed principles, adapted to the habits and original institutions of the people. A competent provision in lands and money has been allotted to such chiefs, and it therefore naturally becomes both their duty and their interest, to encourage industry and to protect the inhabitants.

2. The government lands will be let generally to the heads of villages, who will be held responsible for the proper management of such portions of the country as may be placed under their superintendence and authority. They will re-let these lands to the cultivators, under certain restrictions, at such a rate as not to be found oppressive; and all tenants under government will be protected in their just rights, so long as they shall continue to perform their correspondent engagements faithfully; for it is intended to promote extensive industry and consequent improvement, by giving the people an interest in the soil, and by instituting amongst them an acknowledged claim to the possession of the lands, that they may thus be induced to labour for their own profit and advantage.

3. The system of vassalage and forced deliveries has been abolished generally throughout the island: but in the Batavian and Preangen Regencies such a modification of the former arrangements has been carried into execution, as it was found practicable, under existing circumstances, to introduce; and provisionally the Blandong system will be continued to a certain extent in the central Forest Districts.

4. To encourage the cultivation of so important an article of export as coffee may become, when the trade of Europe and America may be thrown open to free competition, government have stipulated to receive any surplus quantity of that commodity from the cultivators, and a reasonable and fixed rate, when a higher price for it cannot be found on the market.

5. To extend free trade and commerce, and to promote a spirit of enterprise and speculation among the inhabitants, the Bhoom farms have been abolished, the duties upon the principle articles of export have been

taken off, and it is intended to modify and amend the customs-house regulations before the 1st January next. The toll-gates and the transport duties of the interior have been diminished as much as possible, and in the gradual progression of improvement they will be abolished.

6. Every facility will be afforded towards obtaining teak timber for the construction of small craft, and of such additional tonnage as, upon the improved system, will be undoubtedly required.

7. Government have taken upon themselves the exclusive management of the salt department. It appears, the inhabitants of most parts of the island paid a very irregular and exorbitant price for this necessary article of consumption; while the system adopted by the farmers was radically vicious, and equally oppressive and vexatious to the people, as it was detrimental to the immediate interests of government.

Such an improved system for the supply of salt will be immediately adopted, as may appear advisable; and in this and every other arrangement, the government propose the advancement of the interests and happiness of the people at large, and the promotion of the public prosperity of this colony.

Given at Batavia, this the 15th day of October, 1813.
By me, the Lieutenant-Governor of the island of Java and its Dependencies,
T. S. Raffles

By order of the Honourable the
Lieutenant-Governor in Council,
C. Assey,
Secretary to Government.

Council Chamber,
Oct 15, 1813.

Appendix C

The Treaty of Peace Concluded at Yandabo[1]

Treaty of Peace, between the Honourable the East India Company on the one part, and his Majesty the King of Ava on the other, settled by Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, K.C.B and K.C.T.S., commanding the expedition, and Senior Commissioner in Pegu and Ava, Thomas Campbell Robertson, Esq. Civil Commissioner, in Pegu and Ava, and Henry Dacie Chads, Esq., Captain commanding his Britannic Majesty's and the Honourable Company's naval force on the Irawadi river, on the part of the Honourable Company, and Mengyee Maha-men-hlah-kyanten, Woongyee Lord of Laykaing and Mengyee-maha-me-hlah-thee hathoo Atwen Woon, Lord of the Revenue on the part of the King of Ava, who have each communicated to the other their full powers agreed to, and executed at Yandaboo in the Kingdom of Ava, on this twenty-fourth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, corresponding with the fourth day of the decrease of the moon Taboung, in the year one thousand one hundred and eighty-seven, Guadma era.

Art. 1. – There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company on one part, and his Majesty the King of Ava on the other.

Art. 2. – His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jyntea. With regard to Munnipore, it is stipulated that, should Gumbheer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognized by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof.

Art. 3. – To prevent all future dispute respecting the boundary line between the two great nations, the British government will retain the conquered provinces of Aracan, including the four divisions of Aracan, Ramree, Cheduba and Sandowey; and his Majesty the King of Ava cedes all right thereto. The Amoupectoumieu or Aracan mountains, (known in Aracan by the name of Yeoamatoung or Phokingtoun range,) will henceforth be the boundary between the two great nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation, will be settled by Commissioners appointed by the

1 Reproduced in Appendix III, Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix, pp. 20-24.

respective Governments for that purpose, such Commissioners from both Powers to be of suitable and corresponding rank.

Art. 4. – His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the British government the conquered provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, Mergui, and Tennasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Saluen river for the line of demarcation on that frontier. Any doubts regarding their boundaries shall be settled as specified in the concluding part of Article Third.

Art. 5. – In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burmese government to retain the relation of peace and amity between the two nations, and as part indemnification to the British government, for the expenses of the war, his Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore rupees.

Art. 6. – No person whatever, whether native or foreign, is hereafter to be molested, by either party, on account of the part that he may have taken, or have been compelled to take, in the present war.

Art. 7. – In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two Governments, it is agreed that accredited Ministers, retaining an escort or safe-guard of fifty men, from each shall reside at the Durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase or to build a suitable place of residence of permanent materials, and a Commercial Treaty upon principles of reciprocal advantage will be entered into by the two high contracting powers.

Art. 8. – All public and private debts contracted by either Government, or by the subjects of either Government, with the others, previous to the war, to be recognized and liquidated, upon the same principles of honour and good faith, as if hostilities had not taken place between the two nations; and no advantage shall be taken by either party of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war; and according to the universal law of nations, it is farther stipulated, that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of his Majesty the King of Ava, shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British Resident or Consul, in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenour of British law. In like manner, the property of Burmese subjects dying, under the same circumstances, in any part of the British dominions, shall be made over to the Minister or other Authority delegated by his Burmese Majesty to the Supreme Government of India.

Art. 9. – The King of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels, in Burman ports, that are not required of Burman ships or vessels in British ports; nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river, or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns, or unship their rudders, or to do any act not required of Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.

Art. 10. – The good and faithful ally of the British Government, his Majesty the King of Siam, having taken part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards his Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above Treaty.

Art. 11. – This Treaty to be ratified by the Burmese Authorities competent in the like cases, and the ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether European or native, American and other prisoners, who will be delivered over to the British Commissioners; the British Commissioners, on their part, engaging that the said Treaty shall be ratified by the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council; and the ratification shall be delivered to his Majesty the King of Ava, in four months, or sooner if possible, and all the Burmese prisoners shall, in like manner, be delivered over to their own Government, as soon as they arrive from Bengal.

Signature of the British Commissioners

Signature of the Burmese Commissioners

Additional Article – The British Commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest their sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the Fifth Article of this Treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible to his Majesty the King of Ava, consent to the following arrangement with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the Article above referred to, into instalments; viz. upon the payment of twenty-five lacs of rupees, of one quarter of the sum total, the army will retire to Rangoon. Upon the farther payment of a similar sum at that place within one hundred days of this date, with the proviso, as above, the army will evacuate the dominions of his Majesty the King of Ava with the least possible delay, leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments, in two years, from this twenty-fourth day of February, 1826 AD, through the Consul or Resident in Ava or Pegu, on the part of the Honourable East India Company.

Appendix D

The Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Her Majesty and the Sultan of Borneo (Brunei). Signed, in the English and Malay Languages, 27 May 1847

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland being desirous to encourage commerce between Her Majesty's subjects and the subjects of the independent Princes of the Eastern Seas, and to put an end to piracies, which have hitherto obstructed that commerce; and His Highness Omar Ali Saifadeen, who sits upon the throne and rules the territories of Borneo, being animated by corresponding dispositions, and being desirous to co-operate in any measures which may be necessary for the attainment of the above-mentioned objects, Her said Britannic Majesty and the Sultan of Borneo have agreed to record their determination in these respects by a Convention containing the following Articles:

Article 1. Peace, friendship, and good understanding shall from henceforward and for ever subsist between Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and His Highness Omar Ali Saifadeen, Sultan of Borneo, and between Their respective heirs and successors, and subjects.

Article II. The subjects of Her Britannic Majesty shall have full liberty to enter into, reside in, trade with, and pass with their merchandize through all parts of the dominions of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo, and they shall enjoy therein all the privileges and advantages with respect to commerce, or otherwise, which are now or which many hereafter be granted to the subjects or citizens of the most favoured nation; and the subjects of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo shall in like manner be at liberty to enter into, reside in, trade with, and pass with their merchandize through all parts of Her Britannic Majesty's dominions in Europe and Asia as freely as the subjects of the most favoured nation, and they shall enjoy in those dominations all the privileges and advantages with respect to commerce or otherwise, which are now or which may hereafter be granted therein to the subjects(s) or citizens of the most favoured nation.

Article III. British subjects shall be permitted to purchase, rent, or occupy, or in any other legal way to acquire, all kinds of property within the dominions of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo; and His Highness engages that such

British subjects shall, as far as lies in his power within his dominions, enjoy full and complete protection and security for themselves and for any property which they may so acquire in future, or which they may have acquired already, before the date of the present Convention.

Article IV. No article whatever shall be prohibited from being imported into or exported from the territories of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo; but the trade between the dominions of Her Britannic Majesty and the dominions of His Highness shall be perfectly free, and shall be subject only to the customs duties which may hereafter be in force in regard to such trade.

Article V. No duty exceeding one dollar per registered ton shall be levied on British vessels entering the ports of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo, and this fixed duty of one dollar per ton to be levied on all British vessels shall be in lieu of all other charges or duties whatsoever. His Highness moreover engages that British trade and British goods shall be exempt from any internal duties, and also from any injurious regulations which may hereafter, from whatever causes, be adopted in the dominions of the Sultan of Borneo.

Article VI. His Highness the Sultan of Borneo agrees that no duty whatever shall be levied on the exportation from His Highness's dominions of any article the growth, produce, or manufacture of those dominions.

Article VII. His Highness the Sultan of Borneo engages to permit the ships of war of her Britannic Majesty, and those of the East India Company, freely to enter into the ports, rivers, and creeks situated within his dominions, and to allow such ships to provide themselves, at a fair and moderate price, with such supplies, stores and provisions as they may from time to time stand in need of.

Article VIII. If any vessel under the British flag should be wrecked on the coast of the dominions of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo, His Highness engages to give all the assistance in his power to recover for, and to deliver over to, the owners thereof, all the property which can be saved from such vessels. His Highness further engages to extend to the officers and crew, and to all other persons on board such wrecked vessel, full protection both as to their persons and as to their property.

Article IX. Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Sultan of Borneo hereby engage to use every means

in their power for the suppression of piracy within the seas, straits, and rivers subject to their respective control or influence, and His Highness the Sultan of Borneo engages not to grant either asylum or protection to any persons or vessels engaged in piratical pursuits; and in no case will he permit ships, slaves, or merchandized captured by pirates to be introduced into his dominions, or to be exposed therein for sale. And her Britannic Majesty claims, and His Highness the Sultan of Borneo concedes to Her Majesty, the right of investing Her officers and other duly-constituted authorities with the power of entering at all times with Her vessels of war, or other vessels duly empowered, the ports, river, and creeks within the dominions of His Highness the Sultan of Borneo, in order to capture all vessels engaged in piracy or slave-dealing, and to seize and to reserve for the judgement of the proper authorities all persons offending against the two Contracting Powers in these respects.

Article X. It being desirable that British subjects should have some port where they may careen and refit their vessels, and where they may deposit such stores and merchandize as shall be necessary for the carrying on of their trade with the dominions of Borneo, His Highness the Sultan hereby confirms the cession already spontaneously made by him in 1845 of the Island of Labuan, situated on the north-west coast of Borneo, together with the adjacent islets of Kuraman, Little Rusukan, Great Rusukan, Daat, and Malankasan, and all the straits, islets, and seas situated half-way between the fore-mentioned islets and the mainland of Borneo. Likewise the distance of 10 geographical miles from the Island of Labuan to the westward and northward, and from the nearest point half-way between the islet of Malankasan and the mainland of Borneo in a line running north till it intersects a line extended from west to east from a point 10 miles to the northwards of the northern extremity of the Island of Labuan, to be possessed in perpetuity and in full sovereignty by Her Britannic Majesty and Her successors; and in order to avoid occasions of difference which might otherwise arise, His Highness the Sultan engages not to make any similar cession, either of an island or of any settlement on the mainland, in any part of his dominions, to any other nation, or to the subjects or citizens thereof, without the consent of Her Britannic Majesty.

Article XI. Her Britannic Majesty being greatly desirous of effecting the total abolition of the Trade in Slaves, His Highness the Sultan of Borneo, in compliance with Her Majesty's wish, engages to suppress all such traffic on the part of his subjects, and to prohibit all persons residing within his

dominions, or subject to him, from countenancing or taking any share in such trade; and His Highness who may be found to be engaged in the Slave Trade may, together with their vessels, be dealt with by the cruisers of Her Britannic Majesty as if such persons and their vessels had been engaged in a piratical undertaking.

Article XII. This treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at Brunei within twelve months after this date.
This 26th day of May, 1847.

(L.S.) JAMES BROOKE
(The Seal of the Sultan)

Appendix E

The Racial Census employed in British Malaya from 1871 to 1931

1871	1891	1911 Straits Settlements (SS)	1911 Federated Malay States (FMS)	1931
Europeans and Americans (plus 18 subcategories)	Europeans and Americans (plus 19 subcategories)	Europeans (plus 31 subcategories and Americans)	Europeans (plus 17 subcategories)	Europeans (plus 24 subcategories)
'Malay' Races: Boyanese Bugis Dyaks Javanese Jawipekans Malays Manilamen	'Malay' races: Aboriginies Achinese Boyanese Bugis Dyaks Javanese Jawipekans Malays Manilamen	'Malay' and other allied races: Achinese Amboinese Balinese Bandong Bahjarese Bantamese Batak Borneo Boyanese Bugis Bundu Dyaks Dusuns Javanese Jawipekans Kadayans Korinchi Malays Rawanese Sulu Sundanese Tutong	'Malay' races: Malay Javanese Sakais Banjarese Boyanese Mendeling Kerinchi Jambi Achinese Bugis	'Malay' races: Malays Javanese Boyanese Achinese Bataks Minangkabaus Korinchis Jambis Palembang Other Sumatrans Riau-Linggans Banjarese Dutch Borneo Bugis Dayaks Sakais Others Also natives from Dutch East Indies

1871	1891	1911 Straits Settlements (SS)	1911 Federated Malay States (FMS)	1931
Chinese	Chinese 'races': Cantonese Hokkiens Hylams Khehs Nanyangs Teo-Chews	Chinese: Straits-born China-born	Chinese 'tribes': Cantonese Kheh Tie Chiu Kheh Hokkien Hiu Hua Hok Chiu Tie Chiu Hailam Kwong Sai	Chinese 'tribes': Hokkien Tiu Chiu Hakka (Kheh) Hok Chhia Cantonese Hailam Hok Chiu Kwongsai
Hindus Bengalees and other Indian races not specified.	Tamils and other Indian races: Bengalees Burmese Parsees	Indians: India-born Straits-born born elsewhere	Indians by race: Tamil Telugu Punjabi Bengali Malayali Hindustani Afghan Gujerati Maharatta Burmese	Indians by race: Tamils Telegu Malayalam Punjabi United Provinces Burmese Bengal Bombay Bihar Nepal

Source: Charles Hirshman, *'The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia'*. Journal of Asian Studies, 1987.

Timeline of Events and Developments in Southeast Asia 1800-1900

1802: Emperor Gia Long establishes the Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnam, after overthrowing the Tay Son dynasty.

1805: King Rama I of Siam orders the compilation of the Three Seals Code of Law for the entire kingdom.

1806: As a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, on 27 November 1806 British Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Pellew attacks the Dutch in Batavia, Java, with a squadron of seven British navy ships.

1807: On 25 March 1807 the British East India Company in Penang establish a local police force, based on the Charter of Justice that was granted to the Penang authorities. The force is led by European officers.

1809-1812: During the reign of Burma's King Bodawpaya and Siam's King Rama I Burma and Siam go to war: The Burma-Siam War lasts until 1812, with most of the campaigns being fought along Burma's Tenasserim coast.

1811: The British invade and conquer Java from the Dutch. The British occupation of Java lasts from 1811 to 1816.

1811-1812: The Cambodian rebellion: Cambodia's King Ang Chan is briefly dethroned by his brother Ang Snguon, who was helped by Siam's Rama II.

1814: Stamford Raffles, as Lieutenant-Governor of British-held Java, issues the *Regulations* and *Revenue Instructions* of 1814.

1816: Reverend Robert Sparke Hutchings establishes the Penang Free School in Georgetown, Penang.

1817: Burma's King Bodawpaya comes to the aid of Badan Chandra Borphukan and begins the invasion of Assam. A second and third Burmese invasion would follow in 1819.

1819: After his posting at Bencoolen, Stamford Raffles along with William Farquhar gain control of Singapore and declare it part of the East India Company's territories in the East Indies, turning Singapore into a free port in order to divert trade from the Dutch ports in Java and Sumatra. By supporting Tengku Hussein of Johor against his brother Tengku Abdul Rahman, Sultan of Johor-Riau-Lingga, the British are able to gain Singapore, after installing Tengku Hussein as the island's ruler.

12 November 1821: The Siam-Kedah War: The forces of King Rama II overrun Kedah, while Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Shah II appeals to the East India Company for help, though the company does nothing. The Siam-Kedah War would continue from 1821 to 1842.

1823: The Emperor of China sends an embassy to Burma, demanding tribute from the Burmese ruler.

1824: The First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826). The war was the direct result of the expansion of the British East India Company's presence in Bengal and Burma's desire to contain the spread of British power there. Burma's ruler King Bagyidaw moves his forces into Manipur and Assam, while the East India Company supports anti-Burmese forces there. Hostilities begin on 5 March 1824, and British forces are able to advance into Burma, leading to the Battle for Rangoon (late 1824), the Battle of Danubyu (April 1825) and the Battle of Prome (late 1825). The Burmese are finally defeated in February 1826, and the Treaty of Yandabo is signed, where Burma is forced to hand over Assam, Manipur, Arakan and Tenasserim, and pay an indemnity of one million pounds.

17 March 1824: The Anglo-Dutch Treaty is signed. Britain gives up the territory of Bencoolen in Sumatra to the Dutch.

1825: Emperor Minh Mạng of the Nguyen dynasty outlaws the teaching of Christianity in Vietnam.

1826: Henry Burney, as agent of the East India Company, signs the Anglo-Siamese 'Burney' Treaty with King Rama III of Siam. The Burney Treaty of 20 June 1826 brought the Kingdom of Siam closer to Britain while the British were at war with neighbouring Burma. The Burney Treaty also allowed Siam to maintain its control of the Malay Kingdoms of Patani, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis and Kedah.

1826: King Anouvong of Vientiane raises his army to rise against Siamese domination and re-establish the Kingdom of Lan Xang. Siam's forces counter-attack, forcing Anouvong to retreat.

1826: The East India Company establishes the Straits Settlements that comprise of Penang, Malacca, Singapore and Dindings, with its capital initially in Georgetown, Penang (1826-1832) and later Singapore (1832-1946). From 1826 to 1867 the Settlements come under Company rule, and on 1 April 1867 it is declared a Crown Colony of the British Empire.

12 November 1828: King Anouvong of the Kingdom of Vientiane is finally overthrown and his kingdom is annexed by Siam. Vientiane is burned to the ground by the Siamese army while thousands of Lao civilians are captured and relocated to Northeast Siam (*Isaan*).

11 May 1829: King Bagyidaw creates the Royal Historical Commission of Burma with the task of writing the official history of the Konbaung dynasty, three years after Burma's defeat at the First Anglo-Burmese War.

1831: Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Kedah attempts to retake Kedah from the Siamese by launching an attack from British-controlled Penang with a force of 3,000 men.

1832: The American frigate USS *Potomac* bombs and destroys the port-town of Kuala Batu in Sumatra during the First American Sumatran Expedition.

1836: Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Kedah makes a second attempt to regain control of Kedah from Siamese hands, launching his attack from Penang. Sultan Ahmad was captured by the British, and was sent to Malacca.

1838: The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge founded in Calcutta by students of the Hindu College of Calcutta.

1838: The nobles of Kedah attempt to retake Kedah a third time, launching their attack from British-controlled Penang.

December 1838-January 1839: The American frigate USS *Colombia* and its escort USS *John Adams* attack and destroy the port-towns of Kuala Batu and Meukek in the Second American Sumatran Expedition.

March 1839-October 1842: The First Anglo-Afghan War. The East India Company attempts to intervene in Afghan politics but suffers a massive defeat and the British are forced to withdraw.

November 1839-August 1842: The First Opium War. Following the Qing Emperor's decision to ban Britain's opium trade in China, hostilities break out between Britain and China. The Chinese forces are defeated, and China is forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking which led to the loss of Hong Kong to Britain and the opening up of five Chinese ports to foreign trade.

1841: Singapore's first hospital for the insane is founded at Bras Basah-Bencoolen road. It would be renamed the 'Lunatic Asylum' in 1861.

1842: Following the death of the King of Ligor, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Kedah opens negotiations with King Rama III of Siam. The Siamese forces were withdrawn from Kedah and Sultan Ahmad was able to regain control of his kingdom.

December 1845-March 1846: The First Anglo-Sikh War. Following the defeat of the Sikhs, Britain gains more territory according to the Treaty of Lahore (9 March 1846).

June 1846: Dutch colonial forces attack Northern Bali with a force of frigates and steamboats. The Balinese are defeated and the royal palace at Singaraja is captured and later destroyed.

8 July 1846: The British navy attack the port-city of Brunei and defeat the forces of the Brunei kingdom. Then on 24 December 1846 Britain gains control of the island of Labuan, and the British attempt to turn Labuan into a free port like Singapore.

27 May 1847: The British-Brunei Treaty of Friendship and Commerce is signed. Brunei loses control of Labuan and several smaller islands, as well as some of its maritime territory. Additionally the Treaty prevents Brunei from ceding any more of its territory to any other Western power.

1847: Henry Wise, formerly of the East India Company, creates the East Archipelago Company and gains the right to mine coal on the island of Labuan from the Brooke government in Sarawak.

April 1848-March 1849: The Second Anglo-Sikh War: The Sikhs are defeated by the Anglo-Indian forces of the East India Company and the Sikh kingdom in Punjab is annexed by the British.

1849: The Burmese-Siamese War: Siam's King Rama III orders the attack on Burmese territory which Siam claims for itself. The Burmese under King Mindon Min fight off the Siamese offensive while also trying to keep the British and Chinese at bay.

December 1850: The Taiping Rebellion begins in China, led by the Christian convert Hong Xiuquan.

5 April 1852-20 January 1853: The Second Anglo-Burmese War. The troops of the East India Company attack and capture Martaban, Rangoon, Bassein and Pegu, leading to the fall of King Pagan Min and the ascendancy of King Mindon. The Burmese court is forced to relocate to the north to Mandalay but King Mindon would never be able to revive his kingdom's economy after the loss of Rangoon and the ports of Arakan.

8 October 1856-October 1860: The Second Opium War. As a result of the Chinese government's unease about the terms of the Nanking Treaty tensions arose in British-Chinese relations. The capture of a British registered vessel (*The Arrow*) was the catalyst for war, and other Western nations – including France and America – would later join in the conflict.

10 May 1857-1 November 1858: The Indian Rebellion: Sepoys of the East India Company's Army based in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, rise up against their commanders and rebel against British company rule. The rebellion proves to be disastrous for the East India Company and when it is finally supressed by force in late 1858 the British government takes over the administration of British India, bringing to an end the era of the East India Company in India. Through the Government of India Act of 1858 the whole of British India comes under direct British rule.

1858-1862: The Cochinchina Campaign: French and Spanish forces attack Cochinchina, and eventually defeat the Cochinchinese forces. Though Emperor Tu Duc was reluctant to cede any territory, the French eventually gained three provinces. The war ends with the signing of the Treaty of Saigon.

1856: The *Police and Conservancy Act of 1856* is passed in Penang, regulating street performances and public celebrations, and henceforth popular street shows would require a police permit.

1859: King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) of Siam establishes the King's Own Bodyguard, the 1st Infantry Regiment of Siam.

1862: The Sarawak Rangers are established.

1863: King Leggio Norodom of Cambodia invites the French to Cambodia, which in turn becomes a French Protectorate.

1863: The Treaty of Hue is signed between the ruler of Vietnam and the French, giving France access to Vietnamese ports. Saigon then becomes the capital of French Indochina.

1866-1868: Captain Ernest Doudart de Lagree leads the French expedition up the Mekong river to see if an overland route into interior China and the Chinese market could be found.

1 April 1867: The Straits Settlements become a Crown Colony, with its own Legislative Council. Non-Europeans are admitted to the Legislative Council, but most of them were wealthy Asian merchants and members of the business community.

May-August 1867: Following the *Muharram* celebrations held in Penang, riots break out between rival Malay gangs and Chinese gangs. The Malay White Flag gang works with the Chinese Ghee Hin secret society while the Malay Red Flag gang is allied to the Chinese Toh Peh Kong society.

1867: Following the Penang Riots the *Preservation of the Peace Ordinance of 1867* is issued.

1869: The *Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance XIX of 1869* is issued in Penang.

1870-1871: Britain and Holland agree on a series of three Anglo-Dutch Treaties in order to settle the disputes between the two colonial territories.

1871: The British introduce the colonial racial census for the first time in British Malaya, and begin grouping all the different ethnic-linguistic groups in the colony under the general typology of 'races'.

1874: Raja Abdullah of Perak signs the Treaty of Pangkor with the British, allowing a British Resident to be attached to the court of Perak. This marks the beginning of Britain's 'forward movement' and intervention in the affairs of the Malay kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula.

1878: King Thibaw Min ascends to the throne of Burma, destined to be the last king of the Konbaung dynasty.

1878: Brunei cedes control of North Borneo (Sabah) to Baron von Overbeck and Alfred Dent. Later in 1881 the British North Borneo Chartered Company is set up to govern Sabah.

1878-1880: The Second Anglo-Afghan War. Britain fails to establish a presence in Afghanistan and is forced to withdraw.

1882: *Ordinance IV of 1882* is passed in Penang, prohibiting non-Chinese subjects from joining any Chinese society or communal association.

April 1882: French Captain Henri Riviere attacks Hanoi and manages to capture it, though he was never authorised to do so.

1883: Annam and Tonkin are declared Protectorates of France.

August 1884-April 1885: The Franco-Chinese War. French Commander Henri Riviere's attempts to expand French influence to Tonkin leads to his death and a reaction by the Chinese, who also take the opportunity to expand their influence into Northern Vietnam. Though neither France nor China had officially declared war, a state of conflict would exist between them up to 1885.

7-29 November 1885: The Third Anglo-Burmese War. British forces march north to Mandalay and defeat the army of King Thibaw, removing him from the throne and sending him into exile. Following his defeat the Palace of Mandalay is sacked and looted by British troops.

January 1886: The whole of Burma is brought into the dominion of the Anglo-Indian Empire. The British forces begin a pacification campaign

across the country, eliminating those who oppose British rule as well as the last supporters of the Burmese royal family.

17 October 1887: Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia are brought together to form French Indochina, with its administrative capital at Saigon (between 1887 to 1902) and later Hanoi (from 1902 to 1945).

1888: After the signing of the Britain-Brunei Protectorate Treaty the Kingdom of Brunei becomes a British Protectorate. In the same year North Borneo and Sarawak also become British Protectorates.

March 1890: Brunei loses the territory of Limbang after it is annexed by Sarawak.

1891: Anagarika Dharmapala, the disciple of the theosophist Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), forms the Maha Bodhi Society along with its own journal, with the aim of reviving Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and criticising the work of Christian missionaries there.

1892: Jose Rizal forms *La Liga Filipina* (The Philippine League) in Manila.

1893: The Franco-Siamese War. French forces in Indochina clash with the forces of the Thai kingdom, leading to the eventual blockade of the Siamese coast by French warships. The Siamese concede to the terms of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 1893, and Siam cedes Laos to France, becoming part of French Indochina.

1893: Laos becomes a Protectorate of France, and is integrated into French Indochina.

1895: The protected states of Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang in the Malay Peninsula are brought together as the Federated Malay States (FMS).

August 1896: The Philippine Revolution begins, led by the anti-colonial *Katipunan* organisation led by Andres Bonifacio

1897-1898: The Dutch KNIL forces begin to encroach on the territory of Pedir, Aceh, in North Sumatra.

7 July 1898: Hawaii is annexed by the United States, ruled as a protectorate, and is declared 'American territory abroad'.

1898: The Spanish-American War begins, which eventually leads to American forces attacking the Spanish in the Philippines.

January 1899: The Philippine-American War: Filipino nationalists in the Philippine Congress pass the Malolos Constitution, which declares the Philippines an independent Southeast Asian republic, but this is not recognized by the Americans. America goes to war against the Filipino nationalist republican government, and the Philippine-American War ensues.

1899: Oil is discovered at Ayer Berkunchi in Brunei.

July 1902: The American government under President Roosevelt passes the Philippine Organic Act, which effectively brings the Philippines under direct American rule.

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